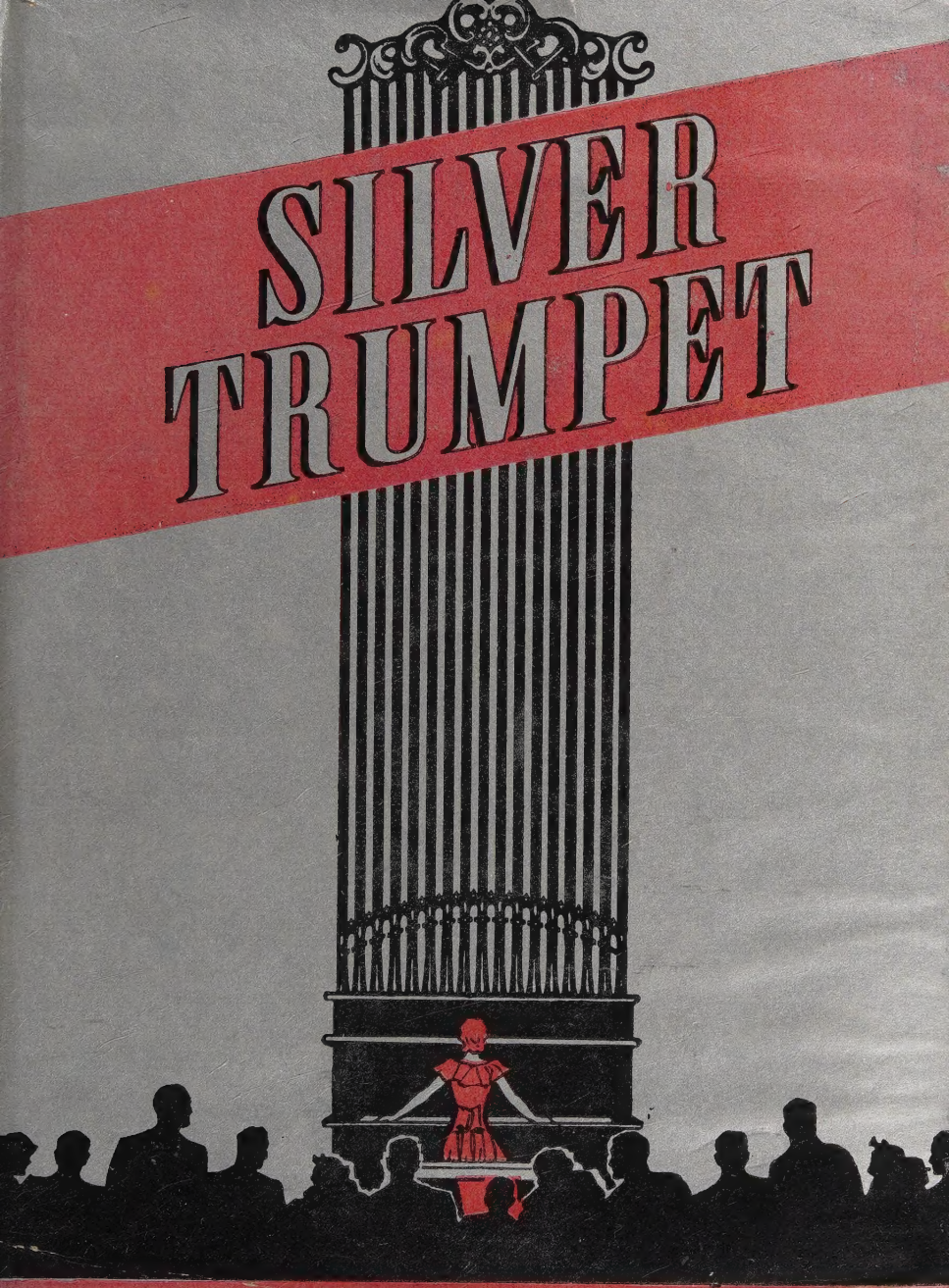
SILVER TRUMPET



By J. WESLEY INGLES

SILVER TRUMPET

GREEN FUND PRIZE STORY

By J. Wesley Ingles

When D. Randall MacRae pushed his way out of the jostling crowd to discover who in the great tent was playing the piano so that the living, lilting rhythm of it got into his blood, he entered upon a career which neither he nor any of his sophisticated friends would have believed possible for him. Fay Thurston, the girl at the piano, is a heroine in whom the charms of our capable, self-reliant modern young women are blended with the endearing virtues and sweet graces of the highest type of womanhood through all ages. That Randall MacRae and Fay Thurston should love each other was inevitable.

Mr. Ingles has produced a fascinating college love story, modern and up-to-the-minute in every detail, though it is absolutely different from the too well-known stories of flaming, purposeless college youth. Here young men and young women study and play intensely, yet with an abandoned gaiety all too little known by an age that is over-sold on sophistication. They pray before athletic contests, attend religious meetings as though they enjoyed them, and sing spiritually searching songs at their picnics and beach parties. It is a prize story that will be prized by all who read it, and will strengthen faith in our young people of today who, we believe, are as fine and noble as the young people of any age.

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(Green Fund Book No. 27)

SILVER TRUMPET

A NOVEL

BY

J. WESLEY INGLES

A PRIZE BOOK

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To the Memory of

PRESIDENT CHARLES A. BLANCHARD, D.D.

WHO, OF ALL MY TEACHERS, HAS LEFT THE DEEPEST AND MOST ABIDING IMPRESS UPON MY LIFE

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

SILVER TRUMPET received the prize offered by the American Sunday-School Union in a contest conducted under the provisions of the JOHN C. GREEN FUND. The Contest was opened March 1, 1929, and closed March 1, 1930. The subject was: "The Heroic Appeal of Christianity to Young People." The manuscript was the unanimous choice of the judges: William A. Freemantle, D.D., Dean of School of Theology of Temple University; Otto F. Nolde, Ph.D., Instructor, School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, and Instructor, Mount Airy Theological Seminary; and Edward S. Bradly, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania.

SILVER TRUMPET

CHAPTER ONE

Subway trains carry so many people, so many different people, to so many different places. And in a great city some of those very different places may happen to be located very strangely near each other.

But D. Randall MacRae was not thinking of that as he removed his panama and passed a soft handkerchief across his forehead for the third time in half an hour. He looked reflectively for a moment at the soil his motion had left on the white, letting the pungent underground wind run swift fingers through his damp hair, rumpling it.

He hated riding on the subway. He hated the deafening roar. He hated the repeated jerky stops. He hated the dank odor. Above all, he despised the people—the loose, cheap mixture of them: the gibbering, gesticulating Jews; the gabbling, garlic-smelling dagos; the dumb, ox-faced laborers; the flabby, white-faced business men; the loud-mouthed, loud-colored boys; the thin, anæmic men; the fat men; the fatter, sloppy women; the squawking kids;

the whole noisy, crowding, shuffling, hurrying, tired mass. The crowds varied in nature and type, according to the hour of day; but he disliked them all—perhaps because he did not know them. He did not know the things their loved ones knew about them. He thought nothing of the pathos, the humor, the love, contained in one hurtling car.

Very rarely it would happen that some slim and not uncomely girl would be found among the insipid crowd, who could help to keep his eyes from taking in the sight of the rest. But even a pretty girl could not keep him from taking in the smell of cheap powder, and July sweat, and bad breaths. And on this particular evening, and on this particular car there happened to be no de Milo form so far as he could see, and he had looked carefully.

He cursed himself for not having brought something to read, and began wearily to let his eyes wander again over the advertising cards which he had read numerous times, the long, gaudy row of them with their psychological gags and their high-toned illustrations. One in particular held his eye for a moment by its combination of simple honesty and suave logic. It seemed out of place up there.

The train screeched to a stop. He noticed the name of the station mechanically, half-heard the rattle and metallic clank of the turnstiles, noticed a few more push their way inside the door before it closed on one man's arm and another's foot, and then turned his eyes back to the posters.

He still believed that he had chosen the lesser of two evils. To drive a straight-eight roadster in a milling herd of cars that seem to move for a brief moment and then lie still for three long moments; to sit impatiently behind the pulsing heart of a thing meant to leap and run into the wind and never be able to give it rein for so much as a city block—this was to him an even greater strain than the olive-bottle subway.

Ten hot minutes passed slowly in the swaying "cattle" car. The man next to him rose as the sound of the brakes went on again. MacRae shot him a contemptuous glance and remained seated. The car was full of such men, each one killing himself to get ahead of another, if only by inches.

It was his station also. When the train had stopped he made for an exit. Most of the close-packed salmon charged the sluiceway at the same time. They were evidently all heading in his direction. A fat man with an unlighted cigar in his cheek began shoving him from the rear. A quick, back jab of his elbow, and MacRae smiled sardonically at the grunt which followed.

He noticed suddenly that a small elderly lady about four feet ahead of him was being crushed painfully by the pushing mob. He jerked back four men of varying sizes (but uniform tempers, judging from the expletives they used), and took her arm. Her eyes smiled her gratitude, but the words would not come at first. Spoken words require breath.

MacRae felt a little embarrassed. This was not the kind of thing he was given to doing. He did not relish it. It was distasteful. But there was something in his old Scotch blood that moved him involuntarily, and there was something in his training that made it the thing to do whether he cared to or not. They edged slowly along in the crowd. He thought he had better say something.

"Tough bunch!" he blurted out, and looked at her hastily. At first sight he had noticed simply that she was short, and dressed with quiet taste. Now he took in the glister of her lovely silver-gray hair and deeply set gray eyes, and watched her lips as they spoke.

"A little." She smiled the words. "But I don't think they all mean to be rough. They're just careless."

He turned his eyes away from hers, from the look of veiled tragedy and patient suffering that did not leave them even when she smiled. He did not like that look. It made him feel helpless and foolish.

Together they climbed the crowded stairs to the street, men pushing past them with impatient and manifest contempt for their slowness. They were soon belched forth from the exit mouth and spilled down through the thick, syruplike stream of humanity to a corner where three ways crossed. There they stopped at the curb as the traffic swept by, and he ventured to speak again, although he felt like

dropping her arm and slipping off through the press unnoticed.

"Do you have far to go?"

"Not far, thank you, but a rather difficult trip, to that tent over there."

She nodded across the swarming intersection to a lot which was for sale at a cool quarter of a million—and so, for the present, remained vacant. On it there was a great gray heap of canvas that rose in a series of hilly peaks like a wind-swirled ridge of dark sand. While he was wondering what it could be, she was speaking again.

"I don't know how to thank you for your kindness, dear," she said quietly, using the last word as if she were addressing one of her intimate friends, and the whole sentence as if she expected him to leave her. It made Randall MacRae's embarrassment return.

"Why, I'll see you over. I'm going right past there."

He lost her reply in the sound of a traffic whistle and the screech of brakes. When the lights changed, they set out across the intersection in the center of a moving mass.

As they approached the other side he began to comprehend more clearly the thing that was looming in front of them. A large sign stood at one of the numerous entrances to the tent. He could just make out the largest letters:

REVIVAL OF THE WORD OF GOD

and farther down, the name

Dr. A. Alfred Campbell

He began to smile almost unconsciously, but she was saying, "I'm afraid I'm a little late, and I would have been much later without your help. I can't tell you how grateful I am. I dread crossing these streets; I would sooner cross the Atlantic."

He mumbled something that was incoherent to himself as well as to her, but she continued, now in a tone of earnest invitation, "I wonder if you would come into the meeting. I'm sure you would enjoy it."

They were almost at one of the entrances now. Through the raised flap he could see the long rows of benches on the earth floor, which was covered with wood chips and shavings, and the wooden platform at the front. His smile returned, expanded, became a conscious smile.

"I'm sorry," he said; "I have another engagement."

"Well, you'll come tomorrow night then, won't you?" And without waiting for his answer, she asked, "And what is your name? I want to remember you. I have a boy about your age."

He thought the look of tragedy in her eyes deepened. They were misty an instant in spite of the smile on her lips.

"MacRae," he said, "Randall MacRae. And yours?"

"I'm Mrs. Wentworth. Perhaps you have heard of my husband. I lost him three years ago. He was a colonel in the Salvation Army." She spoke with a child-like naiveté. He had never heard the name, but said,

"Oh, yes, yes. So you are Mrs. Wentworth?"

She extended her hand gently. He took it quite as gently.

"Good-by," he said with abrupt simplicity, and began to walk away.

It was the hour of summer sunset. The sky was a flood of opalescent, shimmering light. Against it loomed the black hulk of the stadium toward which he was heading. On the rim the lemon yellow sky flowed through the cut letters of the name "EBBETS FIELD," like pent water when floodgates are opened.

He had almost passed the end of the tent when pulsing chords from a grand piano shot into his soul and stuck there, quivering like barbed arrows. There was something different about the way those chords had been struck; and as the crowd began to sing he could hear that peculiar quality of the piano, sweet as the undertone of a deep bell, running, dancing through, and interweaving with the harmony.

If D. Randall MacRae loved anything deeply, that thing was music, music in all and in any of its

forms. He paused. A group of men brushed past him on the sidewalk, and one voice was hoarsely prominent in their babble. He could hear a snatch of it, "That Wop is never going to reach the third round!" MacRae glanced at his watch. Eight-fifteen. There was plenty of time before the main bout. He didn't care for the preliminaries anyhow.

With that thought he slipped into the tent by a side entrance and took a seat quickly. The people were seated as they sang. He began casually to take in his surroundings.

The tent was more massive than its outward appearance indicated. Three main poles supported it in the center and a number of others were placed here and there. Above and in front of the speaker's desk hung a three-horn megaphone amplifier. A young man with sleek black hair and a mellow baritone voice led the singing. There was nothing but grace in his leadership. He had none of the cheerleader gyrations which MacRae was accustomed to associate with such meetings as this. When he moved to the side of the desk, his voice faded into the congregational harmony. When he returned, the amplifiers would send it singing out above the rest, like an organ melody played on an oboe stop above a muted-flute stop accompaniment. Behind him stood a curiously assorted choir, and at his left, the piano and three or four solo instruments. MacRae did not recognize the hymn they were singing. He only knew the singing was good, and the accom-

paniment wonderful. He could not see the pianist. A pole was directly in his line of vision. After his first cursory examination of the place he closed his eyes to listen. That was a habit of his.

It was over suddenly and the young song leader's voice came clearly, but with a somewhat distorted loudness, through the amplifiers. He was speaking:

"We will be favored at this time with a piano solo by Miss Thurston."

MacRae opened his eyes in time to see a young woman rise from her seat at the piano. She was now a little in front of the pole, and what he saw almost made him lose what she was saying; but the voice of sweet naturalness forced him to listen while he looked. She said,

"I shall play for you my interpretation of that hymn we all know and love, 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul.' Please think of the words as I play."

She sat down and MacRae moved four seats to the left. A few seats were still vacant at the rear on each side of the main central section.

There was a moment of tense silence in which she rubbed white fingers meditatively with a gossamer wisp of handkerchief; then she slowly placed it at the right of the keyboard. MacRae was totally unprepared for what followed. He had often carelessly sung the hymn in chapel at Princeton. He knew the words quite well.

A crash, that began somewhere in the middle clef and rumbled down to the bass, came from the piano

like a clap of approaching thunder. The rumble was still dying away when from the instrument seemed to come the cry of a soul in sore distress. "Jesus, lover of my soul," cried the piano. Then another crash of thunder joined the first, and the cry was repeated. Holbrook's "Refuge" was evidently furnishing the theme. But here music was being created. MacRae felt that as he listened. Here was creative genius. Above the singing call of the two piano voices could be heard the continuous roar of a storm, the surge of cruel waters—waters that roll nearer—the breaking crash of surf against riven rocks, the violence of tempests that still are high. And always, always, sweetly and strong as the voice of faith, those two persistent, harmonic melodies. Then came the gradual slackening of violence, and finally the sudden cessation of it altogether, as if the storm-racked vessel had been safely guided into an unexpected haven. Quiet, peaceful wash of water, and voices of stricken faith now turned to praise, now supplication, and back again to praise, ending in a shout of glory, a chord of triumph that would seem to rise to all eternity.

Miss Thurston removed her foot from the pedal. The last vibration ceased. She reached again for the handkerchief she had laid down.

There was no applause. There could be none. The audience shook itself slowly back to time and place and the voice of the song leader announced the number of the next hymn.

This time the crowd rose to sing. As they did so, MacRae walked deliberately around the rear of the tent to the right center aisle and strode down that until he found a seat just four rows from the platform. For the first time in his life he was voluntarily sitting in a front seat at a religious meeting. He was directly below the pianist. The woman next to him extended her hymn book. He took a corner of it in his left hand, but never looked at the hymn.

He was fascinated. This was something new under the sun. Here was a young woman handling a piano with the skill of a concert artist, filling in with the most delightful symmetry all those multiple harmonies that vibrate above and below every sung chord or melody. He had never heard hymns so played before. She seemed to play as a bird flies, instinctively, although behind that apparent ease there were undoubtedly long hours, years of hours, of patient, continuous practice.

He watched her with increasing interest and noticed that she was singing as she played. The electric bulb behind her head cast a halo through brown hair that rippled in waves which rainy weather would only make the more wavy. As she sang the light glistened on her moist red lips. MacRae found his pulse beating faster, and the hand that held the book began to tremble. He was glad when the hymn was finished. He could sit down.

During the singing of the last stanza a rather tall,

thin man with a crown of snow-white hair had ascended the platform steps and crossed to the small table on the side opposite the piano. MacRae had scarcely noticed him. His eyes were now permanently fastened on Miss Thurston.

While the offering was being taken he was torn between the necessity of watching her and of listening to her playing. He could not do both well. She was accompanying the baritone in an offertory solo, which was simply a hymn, but a hymn sung and played in a new way. He had never heard such accompaniment before. Her fingers seemed to drip melodic sweetness, exquisite as the oil of spikenard. It was soft, full of little hurried runs, and flights of pure fancy; full of deep, single notes held for a period—vibrant, rich; of eloquent, silent pauses. It was the essence of distilled beauty. Never were two stanzas the same.

Her soul seemed one with the singer's. She anticipated, accompanied, followed his every note with the most fitting of sounds, or the most impressive stillness. Until the song ended, his sense of hearing won the struggle over sight. He listened and thrilled to every vibrant chord, thrilling as he had never done at a Junior Prom under the spell of Paul Whiteman's most passionate jazz.

However, there was more than music in this thrill. He knew that when it stopped and he found himself able once more to yield to his visual impressions. The girl was beautiful, with the beauty

of naturalness. He began to tell himself so, and tried to analyze the particular touches which made the whole picture so delightfully pleasing.

He took the five minutes while other heads were bowed in prayer to make his analysis. Her head was bowed too. It was a lovely head, crowned with long hair, whose soft knot seemed to balance perfectly the smooth forehead, sensitive nose, and chin that curved into the slightest suggestion of the masculine prominence that speaks of determination. Her neck was bent with a most pleasing grace, and her shoulders had the solid firmness of muscle that could come only from healthful exercise. He was thinking how beautiful those shoulders would be in an evening gown. Now they were covered by a loose dress of a tan sand-color made of a dreamily soft material. He did not know a thing about women's dresses, but he thought he had never seen one more becoming to the athletic form it draped and followed smoothly. He was just completing the examination, had reached the curved ankle and the petite shoe, when he heard "Amen" and felt conscious of the rustle of a crowd's back straightening, and heard the clearing of a crowd's throat.

Out of the corner of his eye he noticed the tall, thin man rise and approach the pulpit, but he was watching Miss Thurston as she quietly and interestedly scanned for an instant the audience that now almost filled the tent. Something of the love of people was in her look. She did not settle it on

any individual. Her eyes crossed his once and passed on. He thrilled again curiously. But the noted Bible teacher who had drawn the crowd was speaking. He was forced to listen, and he followed her eyes to the front of the platform.

Dr. Campbell's rich, perfectly modulated voice was saying something about the hymn he wished the people to sing before his address. MacRae was glad. He would hear her play again. They remained seated. He started to sing, but stopped to listen and marvel at the grace and ease with which Miss Thurston interpreted the hymn. She did not look at the music after an initial glance. It was over too soon.

Then the deep, clear voice began again. Miss Thurston took a chair and opened her Bible to the passage which was to be the basis of the speaker's exposition. There was nothing ostentatious about her attitude of attentive eagerness. If she were affecting interest it was the best piece of acting MacRae had ever seen. But what would be the advantage in acting? The violinist sat and looked about the tent with a complacent, self-satisfied air. She was apparently wondering if there were any new people to admire the white smoothness of her skin and the delicate grace of her fingers. To MacRae the contrast was astonishing.

With an almost audible sigh of relief he turned back to Miss Thurston, and there he stayed for approximately half an hour. He had never before

manifested such continuous attention on one subject, not even at the theater. Here he was studying a girl in a tan dress in bold relief against the black sheen of a grand piano. It was a study that constantly presented new angles of beauty as he studied it. He began to appreciate some of the truths he had half-learned in that course in masterpieces of art which he had taken the previous year as a snap elective. So complete was his absorption in the subject of his study that the exquisite speaking voice scarcely obtruded into his intelligence and seldom even into his consciousness. It was like the charming sound of a sonorous radio to one whose attention is gripped by the enchanting scenes in a book he is reading. He knew it was there. He heard it, and he did not hear it.

Only twice did he actually hear any of the words. At the beginning of the address, when the speaker announced his text, MacRae had been forced to look at him a moment. The man was transfigured. His face was rugged, nose and mouth were prominent. It was a sheet of old parchment upon which had been indelibly written vigorous strength, high emotion, quick, vivid imagination. The glasses he wore could not dim the flash of dark eyes. With the thin, sensitive hand of an artist, almost effeminate in its grace, but overwhelmingly masculine in its strength, he pushed back a falling lock of the white hair that was as thick and wavy as a youth's. He had stood for a second, silent, elo-

quent in silence, dramatic. Then the parchment-like face was illumined with emotion, the right hand pointed to the Bible, and he spoke:

"There you have Paul's autobiography in one sentence. There you have his estimate of life: 'To me to live is Christ.'"

MacRae heard those words, heard them better than he knew. He would remember them. He did not know that at the time. He turned back to Miss Thurston. She was taking notes.

The only other interruption to his fascinating half-hour study did not come until near the close of the address. This man believed in a conclusion; he believed in driving home the truth about which he was speaking; in driving it straight home to the hearts of his hearers. If they heard nothing else, they were to hear this—and they did. MacRae heard him; he could not shut the words out; they were too full of force, too earnestly uttered; and they simply refused to be ignored. He listened.

"Imagine," Dr. Campbell was saying, "that you have in your hand a clean piece of paper, and are writing on it for yourself—God help you! Take your pencil and write! Write the story of your life, honestly, faithfully, truly, in as brief a sentence as Paul wrote the story of his. Now, write:

" 'To me to live is—money.'

"Now be honest, in God's name. If you have played the hypocrite before, do not do it now.

Write it down; not for man's eyes, but for God's. 'To me to live is money.' If that is true, put it down.

" 'To me to live is pleasure.'

" 'To me to live is fame.'

"Oh, fill them in for yourself!

"Now, you have it written, your life's story. You never looked it squarely in the face before. There it is, right in front of you, the self-evident truth, the inner meaning of all your life.

"Now finish it. Write under it—as Paul did—your estimate of life. Now, add Paul's estimate of death:

" 'To me to live is money; to die is'—I cannot write 'gain' after that! To die is loss. I shall leave it all. 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb; naked shall I return thither.'

" 'To me to live is pleasure; to die'—oh! do not talk to me about death! It is the last thing I want to think about. I want my pleasure, my laughter, this hollow crackling of thorns under a pot; 'tis all I have! Let me have it; but in God's name do not talk to me about death. Why, man, I do not like to walk down the street in the dark, because I think of death. I cannot write that.'

" 'To me to live is fame—' Now, finish it. 'And to die—no, I cannot. For if they put my name on a marble monument, directly it is erected, Nature, with mossy fingers, will begin to pull it down. I

cannot write that. To die is to perish; to be forgotten! What is fame when I am gone? I cannot write it.'

"No, beloved, and you cannot write Paul's estimate of death after anything except Paul's estimate of life."

The voice went on for a moment or two with the pleading sincerity of a passionate lover of souls; but MacRae lost the rest. He had heard too much. He was uncomfortable. He suddenly realized that he had missed a good bout. He had five hundred on the Irishman. He was chagrined, disgruntled, angry with himself. A piece of music had led him to listen to this. This tommyrot! This religious bull! This fool asceticism! This ethical oratory! This effeminate mollycoddle, milksop stuff that your grandmother is always talking about! He was getting more angry. He was nervous. He wanted to get out.

He bent his head stiffly as the people bowed in the closing prayer. His eyes were at the piano.

When they rose to sing the last hymn, he slipped out and down the aisle. Outside the tent he paused to listen. It was still there, the pulsing music of the piano, the joyous accompaniment. That girl! He felt he would like to know her. He felt that he did know her. He wanted to tell her so. He would never do it, of course. He smiled to himself.

It was over. Through the door of the tent he watched her rise and pick up her belongings. The

cornetist was talking to her. It made him feel funny. He wished he had his trumpet there. He could show that chap how to lip a horn. Awful the way he blared out most of the time, spoiling the perfect effect of her music. Her music! It was a part of her and he loved it.

The crowd was filtering toward the various exits. He turned to go.

Against the black night sky he noticed the vague outline of a square tower and on each face there glowed in letters of red fire the single word:

BOND

He had often seen it before on his way to Ebbets Field. He had never noticed it before. Now he did, and again he smiled as he walked toward the subway. He shrugged his shoulders:

"What have bonds to do with me! I'll forget her tomorrow," he thought.

CHAPTER TWO

Tomorrow came, but he had not forgotten her.

Instead, he had thought of almost nothing, or nobody else. The day had been a blur of confusion, a mist of perplexity, a sodden rain of unpleasant duties. The thought which made it seem such a tedious, never-ending day, at the same time, the one thought which made it bearable was, he would see her again that night.

Night had come at last, and he had sat for another hour and a half of bliss and torture in the fourth row from the front.

Several nights—two weeks of nights in fact—had passed since then. Every night had found him in his usual seat. Every night had tightened the bond. He knew now that he was strangely, passionately in love. He had to admit it to himself. Doubt was no longer possible. The awful emptiness of last night had revealed the truth to him.

He had known that Dr. Campbell's short, but powerful ministry in the tent was over, and that a man of different type, an evangelist, was coming to carry on the work there during the month of August. But what he had not known, nor even suspected, was the hideous truth that *she* was going too. He should have known, but he had come late to that last meet-

ing of hers. The farewell speeches to the Campbell party were almost over when he arrived. He was just in time to hear the chairman of the Evangelistic Committee say something about Miss Thurston's returning to Wharton in the fall for her last year. Of course, he had taken mental note of the remark, but had not seen anything of significance in it at the time, aside from the fact that it gave him a piece of information he was very glad to have. He wondered where this Wharton College could be. He had never heard of it.

The next night he went as usual. But had come home terribly disappointed, shaken up, startled, lost. The evangelist had been there, and a new pianist, a young fellow of decided ability. But for MacRae the music was dead, the service empty. The tent gave him the same horrible sensation he had had once when he returned to the Princeton campus a little early from vacation and walked through silent halls that were accustomed to ring with laughter and throb with life. He had walked out early. He could not stand the emptiness. He could not stand the sound of the piano, and the straining voice of the evangelist.

He had lain awake most of the night tossing, thinking, chiding himself for letting her get away without meeting her. He did not even know her first name. Something was decidedly wrong with this picture. It wasn't like Randall MacRae to let a girl get away like that. Something about Miss

Thurston had told him that his usual abruptness would not work. Somehow he could not address this girl with his regular line. For several nights he had planned to go up after the service and tell her how much he enjoyed her playing. That might have served as an introduction. But he had put it off. For the first time since boyhood he had been nervous at the very idea of talking to a girl. Now it was too late.

But, as he stepped hurriedly through the closing door of a subway train on this morning after his sleepless night, a plan was beginning to form in his mind; and by the time he reached Borough Hall station it had taken definite shape.

He came out upon the busy intersection where Brooklyn begins to dress like her sister, Manhattan, in tall finery. Threading his way cleverly through the traffic with the same apparent ease with which he could run a football through a broken field of tackling men, he entered the towering MacRae Building. This was the crowning evidence of the security of the MacRae brothers' real estate and investment firm. He had long since ceased to notice his father's name over the sculptured and massive entrance. He took the express to the eighteenth floor.

It was about ten-fifteen. He was late, fifteen minutes late. That was bad. He knew what that would mean. It would not be wise to break in on the meet-

ing of the managers and salesmen now. He would wait in the office.

He stepped into the anteroom, which led to two offices, his father's and his uncle's. These two brothers had worked together for twenty-five years. They had begun with the joint ownership of a little corner lot and building on the outskirts of Flatbush; now they directed the affairs of a real estate company which had a Scotch grip on much of the increasingly valuable Long Island property. Theirs had been no phenomenal rise based on gamblers' luck, but rather a steady progress governed by judicious foresight and constant study of economic conditions and movements.

The two private secretaries had already been at work for an hour in their particular sanctum. He merely nodded to them as he passed to the door of the *sanctum sanctorum.* He did not feel like flirting this morning. They thought it funny and stopped their typewriter chatter a moment to say so to each other; and, as he closed the inner door behind him, he heard the satiric remark,

"I wonder who she is this time!"

Something else was said. Then laughter. Then the subdued rattle of the typewriters again.

He flung himself into a chair and looked out over the city's haze, the summer haze of morning heat beginning to gather. This view always affected him strangely. Somehow, from this height the world of

men below seemed pathetically like the ant hills he had seen in India and South America: a little more highly developed perhaps, but still governed by an instinct just as blind. What was the meaning of it all; the purpose behind it? This teeming ant hill! It pleased him to look at Brooklyn Bridge and the dim, tall towers beyond. But it bothered him to look straight down at the little black streams crawling aimlessly across stone runways, gathering in little knots of black here, scurrying there, running wildly. Little black ants!

"And I'm one of them," he thought while he smoked six cigarettes and waited for his father to come up from the general meeting of the sales force he was addressing.

He could almost hear his father's voice. He knew what he would be saying. He went over the scene in his mind as he waited, nervously smiling, and beginning to get impatient. His father would be forceful and inspirational, the little business Napoleon talking to his easily discouraged army. He would be shaking them into action, goading them to renewed effort, commanding some, inciting all to carry this new development at Long Shore Acres over the top. He smiled to himself at the mental picture, and yet he knew that this little morning oratory of his father was partly the secret of his success. It was the coach's power to put dynamic energy into a disheartened, listless team. It was the power to make men work for you while you kept them thinking they

were working for themselves. He admired his father's ability and at the same time he despised him for it.

The door had opened noiselessly, but he could tell it by the gust of typewriter sound. He turned from the window, with the seventh cigarette still unlit between his lips and the lighter open in his hand. He rose slowly to his feet before his father spoke. He seemed to rise with formal respect. In reality it was in order that he might meet the expected attack on his feet. He could take it a lot better that way.

"Subway again, I suppose?" asked Duncan R. MacRae, senior, with a sarcastic inflection that bit like a lash. As these two men stood facing each other, it was not difficult to see why the younger man wrote his name D. Randall MacRae to avoid the hated "Junior" he had had through boyhood. They were two natures so different that their common blood made them enemies.

The father was short and wiry in build. His lean fingers were brown with golf tan and the nails of his right hand stained by cigarettes. He held one lightly in his hand now and followed his question with a quick draw and a slow exhalation of gray smoke.

The son's cigarette remained unlit. He took it from his mouth and put the lighter in his pocket.

"No, just tired of hearing you rave to those poor

suckers downstairs," he said, with the cool delight of an expert fencer parrying a thrust. "I could hear you halfway down the hall," he lied.

His father sat down in the swivel chair and leaned back. He flecked a bit of ash from his coat lapel. His clothes were of pressed and speckless perfection. His speech was exasperatingly unhurried.

"Well," he sighed, looking his son straight in the eyes, "if you had as much sense as those 'poor suckers downstairs' there might be some use in talking to you. I notice," he began and paused, putting a pair of shell-rimmed *pince-nez* to his nose. The black ribbon hanging from them gave him the dignity of an eminent schoolman or statesman. The bald top of his head appeared as he bent over a sheet of paper on his desk. "I notice," he went on after a second of perfunctory examination which was purely for effect, "that you received eight hundred dollars from this office last month. You have earned not quite two hundred. How do you account for that, Duncan?"

The passion of anger had suddenly slipped from his tone in the last sentence. In its place was the reproach of keen disappointment. Randall MacRae did not like that any more than he liked being called Duncan. He wanted to keep this talk on the anvil of anger. He wanted to beat it out with the hammer of his spite, and here the old man was dipping it in the cold water already.

"Well, I've made the calls," he said. "I can't

help it if I'm no salesman. You know as well as I do that this isn't my game."

"But you wouldn't mind lounging in the office next summer."

"I have no intention of lounging next summer."

"No?" This came out with a stream of smoke aimed at the ceiling.

"No; I've done enough of that."

"So I have been thinking. You intend to get down to business, then, this year at Princeton, do you?"

There was a pause while the younger MacRae lit his cigarette. Then, with his cool reply he had the conversation back on the anvil, where he wanted it.

"No; I'm not going back to Princeton."

The father rose to his feet. "You're not going back to finish?" he bawled, leaning across the desk.

"You restate the proposition with fair accuracy," smiled Randall. "I congratulate you on your ability to get my meaning so quickly." The cold sarcasm was like smooth oil on a flame.

"You fool! Here I have been giving you everything you want, and now you back out in the last round, like the yellow dog you are!"

"Quite so. And here is the reason, if you need one. In fact, here are several reasons. Take your choice. In the first place, I can't play football this fall. I won't have that incentive to keep my grades up. In the second place, my class has graduated; most of my friends have gone. I'll have a lot of fun

back there without Sid, and Lew, and Barney, and the rest of the gang! In the third place, I want to go somewhere else. And in the fourth place, believe it or not, I'm in love."

During this logically outlined exposition his father had relapsed into the chair.

"Of all the bloomin' idiots! Where do you want to go?"

"I'm not sure yet."

"You're not sure yet! But you want to go somewhere else! You want to get away from Princeton! You're in love! What is the trouble with Princeton and love? Don't they mix?"

"Perhaps. But you wouldn't understand; so I'm not telling you. All I want to know is, do I get my allowance this year, or not?"

"Allowance! You get nothing—this year or any year. I'm through; and if I never see you again it'll be too soon." He spat out the slang aphorism with disgust. "You're a lazy sponger, that's all. Get out!"

His father was really angry. Randall could tell that.

"I thought this would be good-by," Randall said, picking up his hat and sending it spinning along his arm with a deft snap of the wrist. "I just wanted you to have the privilege of saying it first. Ta-ta."

He left the office whistling.

And he left in the office a broken man. When the door had closed quietly but definitely, with the awful finality of Scotch feudal enmity, Mr. MacRae picked up from his desk a sheaf of papers that had been placed there for his examination. He just wanted something to look at. He did not see them. He sat almost motionless for two hours; sat thus staring blankly at them when his brother came in at one o'clock to ask if he were going to lunch.

He hadn't meant to do this thing. He had put such stock in the boy. He had had such high hopes, such vaulting ambitions, such careful plans for his future. And now the little model building lay tumbled in ruins, the ink of rebellion sprawled across the precious blue prints. Life seemed suddenly futile. There wasn't much to live for after all. In spite of his constant grating differences and controversies with the boy, he had always loved him. He had not shown it in any emotional way, it is true. It was not in Scotch nature to do that. But within, unseen, there flowed a powerful stream of affection. As he had sat there silently it had almost burst its Highland confines. He wanted to call up the house to tell Duncan to come back. Twice he had his hand on the telephone.

Then his brother came in—and the struggle was over. The grim stoicism of his ancestry ran the stream back into its deep-channeled bed. There it

continued to flow, hidden, painful, eating away at the walls of its confinement, cutting its way deeper into the rock that was his heart.

He put down the papers and went out to lunch. On his way home young MacRae called in at the Central "Y" and leafed through a college directory, to the "W" section. Wellesley, Wesleyan, Westminster—ah, there it was! Wharton! But to his astonishment there were two schools by the same name. One Wharton College was a girl's school in New England. That might be it. If so, his plan was all shot. The other was almost as bad—a small coeducational school a few miles west of Chicago. He took their addresses, and sent for a catalogue of each.

Arriving at Forest Hills, he told his aunt that he was leaving. She was the only sister of the MacRae brothers who had preferred to keep their name as her own. She was a harmless sort of individual who tried to keep the peace at all costs, and, as a result, generally paid rather high prices for nothing. He asked her to have his stuff packed and sent to his Club in New York. What he could pack into the roadster he took with him, and was away by the time his father sat down to luncheon in the Carleton Grill.

Like his father, he had his hour of trembling remorse—foolish reaction, he called it. It was too bad. It shouldn't have happened. Yet, it was the only way out. It had to come. When the heat

of the quick-flamed passion cooled, he began to consider this strange step. He was like a man on a tight-rope. It was the blood's confounded pride. He couldn't go back.

He sold the roadster for fifteen hundred, a decided loss, for it was practically new and worth much more. But he wanted cash. He took a suite at the Club and began to watch the mails for second-class matter.

The catalogue from the New England Wharton came first. He eagerly scanned the names in the back. No sign of a Thurston in any of the classes.

Two days later he found the name in the other catalogue. When his finger struck it in the long column he jumped up and paced the floor in his excitement.

"Fay Thurston," he repeated in a half whisper. "Fay Thurston!" His mouth shaped the name jubilantly. It was sweet, sweet as herself. He liked to repeat it. It was the kind of name she should have. Parents weren't always so considerate. His, for instance.

Then he sat down and let his imagination recreate the image which was always just behind his eyes. He could see her doing various little things, things of no importance, of no significance—just graceful movements. It was her body, but it was more than her body. There was something in the way she held her head, in the rounded perfection of her chin, in the decided precision of her hands—

something that called to him. He watched her behind his eyes for some time. He had seen her most often in silhouette. It was so he saw her now, the light through her hair.

He roused himself from memory's recorded motion picture, walked down the dim aisle of the mind's theater, and out to the sunlight and dust of reality again. He began to look through the thin blue-covered catalogue.

There were few pictures. The buildings looked pitifully poor after Princeton's Gothic beauty. One particular paragraph claimed his amused attention. It read:

"All students are required to abstain from practices which tend to the wasting of time and the weakening of body and mind; such as, the use of alcoholic liquors and tobacco, card-playing, dancing, attendance of theaters (including moving-picture theaters), and meetings of secret societies. Students who are not willing to coöperate in maintaining the Wharton ideals of college work and life will be invited to withdraw whenever the general welfare demands it, even though there be no special breach of conduct calling for suspension."

This must be a queer place. He was surprised at first, then frankly worried. He had expected it to be queer, of course. But this was queerer than he had anticipated. This was carrying the joke a little further than he wanted it to go. Small college

—yes. Coeducational—yes. Endurable so far—but religious! Not so good! And this particular brand of the distasteful stuff, the worst cod-liver-oil brand on the market! Awful! He twisted his face wryly at the very thought.

"No smoking," it said. He fondled his vest pocket meditatively, took out a package of cigarettes, and tapped one out with a perplexed sigh.

"No shows!" Boy! He had spent two months in the backwoods of Canada one summer. After his return to the city he had taken in a different show every night for a week. But this was to be a nine months sentence.

"No dances." What an existence! He began to doubt if he could make the grade. "Say, boy," he said to himself mentally, "Sing Sing hasn't anything on this place. If you stick this out, 'you're a better man than I am, Gunga Din.' Still, she ought to make a keen jailer."

With that idea in mind he sat down at the desk and began to fill out the application for admission, which was enclosed.

It was a tough job. It taxed his memory, and made him laugh aloud at times. On the dotted lines, the little vacant spaces, he wrote the history of four years of scholastic life. It faced him mockingly. Four years at Princeton; his name in the papers every fall—and not enough credits to graduate. There stood the sum of his academic achievement. He had had to work at Princeton. Sloppy work was not

accepted, even from a star halfback. But when December came there was always an awful slump. The training chains slipped off. He missed about as many classes as he attended. He did not attempt to do the work assigned. He studied what he enjoyed, and he never happened to enjoy anything while he was required to study it. The following year it might become interesting.

Randall was not stupid; on the contrary, he was exceptionally bright. He knew that. He counted on that—counted too much. He could grasp things quickly and with facile ease. He could express himself with grace on any occasion, speak intelligently on any subject, but just couldn't make himself hand in that theme, or that experiment, or that problem on Thursday at eleven-thirty, because Wednesday night he had discovered a new life of John Keats that fascinated him, or there had been an orchestra practice, or the *Princetonian* wanted an article, or there had been a prolonged open-collar bull session in his room.

He reviewed the four years in his mind rapidly as he filled out the sheet transferring his credits. He had taken a haphazard classical course with no definite aim beyond the degree it might bring. One hundred and two semester hours. And he needed one hundred and twenty-eight for that sheepskin with his name and a lot of gibberish in Latin printed on it. Of what fool good was an A. B. anyhow? You didn't know any more or less with one of those

things stuck away in a drawer of your desk. Nice little souvenir to have, though. So Daddy MacRae seemed to think. That brought him back to the scene in the office. It made him more determined. It made him mad. He would see this thing through and fool the old boy. He'd show him.

The days had not softened the feeling between these men, this father and son. Every night saw the barrier widen, the travelers farther apart. In the wake of the first brief regret had come the cold and enduring determination; the Scotch egotism that would choke grief rather than let it whisper repentance or forgiveness.

Quickly he wrote a short explanatory letter to accompany his application. It said that his father had died, and that he could not afford another year at Princeton. It was the only excuse he could figure out. It sounded rather flimsy, he admitted. He asked if he might obtain work as assistant football coach, and gave a modest record of his work on the Varsity for three years. This was one of his virtues. He was no braggart.

He sealed the envelope gravely, addressed it to the "Registrar, Wharton College, Wharton, Illinois," and sent it, a white whisper, down the glass chute in the hall outside his door.

CHAPTER THREE

SEPTEMBER sixteenth came as quickly as ever an exceptionally watched pot can boil. MacRae had packed two trunks the day before. That was one less than he had taken to Princeton. He heard them bumped down the hall to the elevator by the baggagemen, and then followed them to the Grand Central, checking one on his ticket and paying express on the other.

It was a little foolish of him to be taking the Century this way. He realized that now, but his being brought suddenly to self-dependence had not yet taught him to economize. While the fifteen hundred lasted he would probably spend it as freely as he had always done. The permanent joke about the Scotchman's money-tightness *was* a joke. He wished now he had a little of it. It would need to be cultivated. But after all, what was a ten-dollar extra fare compared with the comfort and luxury and speed of the great train? He bought the Pullman ticket at a window where a friend of his worked, a nice chap who had really been forced to quit school because of lack of funds. That thought gave him a twinge of conscience as he spoke to him. The cheery smile of Jack Denny greeted him first through the thin brass bars.

"Hi, Ranny, old boy," he said, "Goin' down early this year?"

"Nope, not going at all. Heading west. Got that Pullman reservation for me? Chicago—on the Century!"

Denny stamped the little yellow ticket twice and handed it through. He did not ask questions. Life had taught him that if a man like MacRae did not volunteer information, he was not likely to appreciate inquisitiveness in a friend.

"Glad to see you, Ranny." His smile turned to the next in line, and Randall left, feeling like a cad. That was a man for you, a chap who really wanted to go to school and couldn't.

He had time for luncheon before the train pulled out.

Arriving at the gates ten minutes before the scheduled time of departure, he found his car well up front on the second section. "Brookhaven" it read, and "No. 111." The porter settled him in "Lower 5." He stepped outside again to look at the three great electric locomotives that would shriek through city and town as far as Harmon-on-the-Hudson, where the more romantic steam giants would take up the race. It seemed a pity to have an engineer like that up front, dressed in clothes that did not distinguish him from one of his passengers. It was like the modern captain of a great liner replacing the picturesque figure that once walked the decks of clipper ships and gave crisp

orders with his mouth instead of with a bell and indicator.

He swung aboard as the warning word rang down the concrete platform. With a precision that was almost a flourish of romance the heavy sections of the "Century" pulled out together—out through the maze of tracks, out of the long darkness, out of the long half-tunnel, gathering speed smoothly without sound from the steady power that moved them; on to the open sky and the edge of the American Rhine.

He had traveled a great deal, but the experience still held its original fascination for him. However, after watching the Palisades, and the Tappan Zee, and Croton Point slip back out of sight, and after observing all the various types of people in his car, he opened the latest book by his favorite contemporary author and thereafter took turns reading the subtly enchanting pages and watching the river change. It was lovely to see it grow young. After having crossed so frequently its old, withered, dirty bosom on the ferries from New York, it was good to see it become virginal again; to watch it throw off the signs of age as if it had drunk at the mythical Fountain of Youth and now ran with the clean joy of a new vitality.

When Albany had been passed, the first call to dinner in the dining car at the rear was sounded. MacRae waited until the last call before he washed and sauntered back through four cars to the diner.

Many others had waited too, it seemed. The tables were full and a number of passengers were standing in line for seats. However, there was room for one. The head waiter beckoned him to a seat at one of the little tables for two on the left-hand side of the car. One side of the table was occupied, very prettily occupied. He sat down with a feeling that this trip might yet be interesting.

She was dressed in a light traveling suit of gray tweed. That much of her apparel he noticed. She had black hair, blue eyes, thin red lips, and was all life. Randall could tell that. He had danced with that type often.

She looked persistently at her consommé as he sat down, eating with delicate grace. While the waiter set his silver and filled his glass with water and clinking ice, MacRae watched for her eyes to lift. They did soon. He looked at them steadily a moment and then gave his order quietly and with the air of one who knew what he wanted without consulting the menu.

There was an embarrassing silence. He fingered his fork and adjusted his napkin. All about them people were talking. He liked to eat in a dining car, even when alone. He liked to watch the landscape swirl past while he ate. But it was much more pleasant to talk to someone. So he began. The first sentence was the hardest. He thought of several, finally deciding on:

"I suppose you have taken this trip before."

She had been waiting for him to speak, looked up, and gave a little laugh that was almost familiar to him.

"Why, how did you know it, Sherlock Holmes?"

"Well, you see, my dear Watson," he turned and addressed the window with a feigned yawn and a perfect English accent, "I noticed that she was not particularly interested in the scenery. Now in all of my acquaintance with young ladies traveling alone for the first time in a strange land, I have found them invariably given to the study of landscape."

"Unless perhaps the interior decorations proved more attractive."

"Quite true, quite true. And is that the reason for your interest in the design on your plate?"

"No; not exactly." She laughed, exquisitely, this time because it was real. "I was trying to think of something——"

"You shouldn't do that," he interrupted. "You are too pretty for such masculine exertions."

"I expected that," she said. "Please let me finish. This is what you are supposed to say, but I'll say it first; 'it seems as if I have seen you somewhere before.'"

"Undoubtedly. I could tell you had been places and seen things. But are you sure it was my radiant person, or only the awful photographic travesty of the original?"

When she laughed, her eyes danced. You had to watch them, and you had to laugh.

"That," she said with a sudden and briefly maintained seriousness, "was just what I was trying to figure out. I'm afraid it must have been the latter——"

"Or you wouldn't have forgotten where you saw me; is that it?"

"Right again, Sherlock."

"Say, would you very much mind using my correct name? Duncan Randall MacRae—with everything in the first name silent except the 'D'."

"Well, 'D', I'm awfully glad to meet you." This with a slight bow of her head and the napkin to her lips to hide the smile which she did not seem to know was in her eyes.

He glared. "It's my turn to select," he said. "Full name, please."

"Nita Mae Carlsen."

"Norwegian?" he asked.

"No; Italian," she mocked, as the waiter returned with his order. "You haven't selected yet."

"I take the first two. They go together—Nita Mae." And as he said the words his mind thought of another name that was like moonlight and soft music to him. "Fay—Fay Thurston," he thought, and then immediately forgot it in the keen enjoyment that he found in talking with this new girl.

She had eaten so slowly that he soon caught up with her. The ease of their conversation said to an observer that they had known each other for years; its subject-matter said they were still strangers.

"What car are you on?" he asked, while she was taking a sip of tea.

"The one just behind this."

"Do you mind if I come back for a little while?"

"Well, I've been having a most delightful time with an old Shylock across from me, but I guess I could spare you a few minutes."

"Thanks, I'll try not to keep you from him too long." Then, "You go to college, don't you?"

"Now what's your clue this time? Do I have that rah! rah! look?"

"No; that schoolgirl complexion."

"Seriously, though, what made you think I go to college?"

"Seriously, then, I couldn't think of anything else you'd be good for—so good for, I should say," he added when she smirked.

"I like that! Shylock is at least civil even if he is silent."

"To be frank, there is my clue. It is your reference to Shylock. I was quite sure that a girl with your looks could not remember that name from High School days. You must have heard it more recently. Am I right?"

"You are, positively——"

"Correct," he supplied, as she paused a moment to select the right word.

"Insulting!" she finished.

"Pardonnez-moi, Mademoiselle."

"Do I really look that dumb?"

"Perhaps I did exaggerate slightly."

"I think you are just trying to make me mad, aren't you? Or do you always talk this way?"

"I'm not always so frank."

"Are you ever sensible?"

"Ever? Yes, forever—to charms like yours!"

"I'm not going to say another word to you until you promise to talk rationally."

"Rationally speaking, what college do you upset with those ravishing eyes?"

Silence.

"Say, looking out of that window doesn't help one bit. Your profile is just as ravishing."

Silence.

"Honest, this ice cream isn't half-bad. Try it. The only difference between this stuff and the stationary variety is—twenty-five cents. Uh-huh—look out. If you do that again, you'll need a styptic pencil instead of a lipstick, and mine is away down in the bottom of my bag. I might not be able to get it in time, and you might not let me use the only other method I can think of."

Silence broken by a smothered gurgle.

Renewed silence.

"Listen, Nita Mae. I'm not going to pay for that ice cream if you don't eat it—hear?"

Silence.

"Oh, you with the eyes! My name's MacRae—emphasis on the Mac. Pass that over here if you don't want it. Such extravagance! Norwegian

women were always noted for that—at least the ones I've fed."

"Give me my check, please."

"Whoopee! I win. The Great Stone Face has spoken. One—two—three—four—five—words; all addressed to me and no promise given. You lose five times. Now, you might as well say some more. You've broken your vow."

"Please."

"What?"

"My check."

"Oh, that's right, the woman always pays. Besides, you're the loser. Here's mine too." He made a motion to pass them over, but as she reached for them he withdrew his hand.

She took a bill from her pocketbook, placed it on the tray, looked at herself in the pocket mirror, gave her nose a touch of powder, and then took a package of cigarettes from the purse and lit one with an art evidently acquired by long practice before a glass.

He smiled. They had nearly all the same technique; it was a little pitiful at times in its showiness.

"Am I to sit here and watch you smoke and never get the offer of a cigarette?"

"Don't you have any?"

"Do you think I'm that Scotch?"

"I wouldn't be surprised."

"It so happens that whither I am bound these cannot come. I'm getting in training for the Transcontinental Bunion Race."

"Really." This with a lift of thin black brows that was quite as sarcastic as the inflection on the first syllable of the word.

"Yes; that's probably where you saw my picture. I get four thousand a month for telling people you can smoke 'Luckies' and still beat Nurmi. 'It's toasted,' you see. Do I get one?"

She passed them over, trying to suppress a smile, but making it all the more delightful when it broke.

"And a light?"

He took the cigarette from her fingers.

"You should advertise for 'Murad' too," she said. "You certainly know how to be nonchalant."

"But you don't know how disturbed you make me internally, lady."

"This gets worse. Shall we go?"

"Let's finish the 'Lucky' first before we reach for the sweet."

They did.

He followed her back to the "Lenora." Her figure was as graceful as he had guessed it would be from what he had seen above the table's edge. He watched her walk before him with perfect poise through the occasional sway of the car. He reached past her and pulled the door open, but she went first across the clanking connection and opened the other

with a lunge of her shoulder and held it for him.

"That's hitting the line," he laughed. "They should start co-ed football."

"We do have an annual co-ed game. You ought to see it."

"You do? Where?"

"At Wharton."

"At Wharton?"

"Yes. You probably never heard of the place."

By this time they were seated in "Section 8." Shylock was nowhere to be seen, although some of his duffel lay scattered on the seat opposite.

"Do you know, I thought this trip would be interesting as soon as I saw you. I happen to be going to Wharton myself."

"Don't kid me, big boy."

"All right, laugh it off. It happens I'm not kidding you this time."

"That so? And what do you expect to do there, sell the boys clothes?"

"No; the girls personality."

"I see."

"Do you think I'll be successful?"

"Depends on how long you last."

"How long would you give me?"

"At your present rate—about two weeks."

"How come?"

"They don't keep animals like you there."

"Then this is your first year too?"

"Smarty."

"Excuse me. I was thinking of your cigarette and of what I read in the little blue book of Wharton etiquette."

"Oh, I give it up for the winter, except for an occasional puff in secret. Then you really do know about Wharton?"

"I said I am going there: due in Chicago 9 A.M., Wharton 10:40. Right?"

"Sounds good. But tell me what you are going there for."

"You tell me first. How did you come to give the school a break?"

"Don't be silly."

"Thanks, your advice is encouraging, but go on."

"Well, being not yet of age, and born into a seventeenth century family, I go where I am sent, see?"

"I suppose you do have your docile moments. Now it's my turn. See if I can do as well. I was told I'd find the girl of my dreams there. I wasn't told I'd find her on the way out."

"So far the witches' prophecy comes true. Hail, MacRae, thane of Wharton!"

"She does know her Shakespeare, doesn't she? Lamb's Tales, perhaps. I didn't mean that one to be ambiguous."

"It wasn't."

To this point the dialogue had been conducted with the utmost solemnity. Now they both broke into hearty laughter. Shylock came from somewhere

and settled himself with a grunt opposite them.

"How many ducats would you say?" whispered MacRae. "He only lacks the gabardine. Must be in a hurry, or he wouldn't take this train. 'Rachel, Rachel, I've been thinking,' " he began to sing under his breath, "Vot a qveer voild this vould be——"

"Stop," murmured Nita. "Remember I've got to sleep in this section tonight."

"I envy you. Let's go out on the observation car and watch the sunset. It will be glorious tonight."

"You're on. I'll fix up first and put on a hat. You save me a seat at the sunset."

He watched her vanish into the women's room, and then pushed and pulled his way through three pairs of doors to the last car. The observation platform was almost full, but he found two chairs. It was cool out here. He went back to his car for his top-coat. It was a long trip. When he returned, she was already seated, and talking gaily to the man near her.

"It's chilly," he said aloud by way of opening the conversation and announcing his presence, while he thought to himself, "That's sure a cute hat."

"You left it to me to save the seat," she sighed.

"I knew you could do it so much better. I can't keep them off, you know, all those women in there." He jerked a thumb over his shoulder toward the interior of the car.

"Have you started again? I hoped the air might help you."

He took a long breath.

"I never thought of that. I do feel better. Do I look it?"

She had put a black fox fur about her shoulders before coming out. Her mouth and chin were hidden in it now as she turned her head to look at him. He saw only the amused eyes above black fur, blue eyes beneath black hair crushed in a little black hat. The eyes were coquettish, mildly so, tantalizingly so. She studied him a moment as if his question gave her the excuse for which she had been waiting.

It was an attractive picture she saw. The collar of the smooth herring-bone weave topcoat was turned up with collegiate careful carelessness, the gray hat-brim turned down over eyes that resembled her own in blue, but with a touch of gray to distinguish the steel from the flower. His nose was straight and full, mouth frank and generous, teeth gleaming, chin and jaw like a square of flint.

"Well, what's the decision?" he asked when he had endured the examination long enough.

"I thought I detected a gleam of sanity there for a moment," she said wearily, "but I fear the fit is about to return."

"For a moment I forgot to look at you. That must account for the 'strange interlude.'"

"I was right, you see. The delirium has returned already. Really, you alarm me."

"Am I the first to become delirious in your presence?"

"You were going to explain to me the beauties of this particular sunset." She waved her hand at the eastern sky. "Proceed."

"I forgot we were traveling west. But have you noticed that rim of moon off there to the left of the tracks? It will be almost full tonight. I do hope our neighbors go to bed early."

"And why?"

"When I get this way I don't like to be observed."

"You forget you are on an observation car."

"Say, what is this, a vaudeville act?"

"I'm sure anyone listening would think so."

"Shall we reform?"

"You might try."

"And you?"

"I'll be glad to help you if I can."

"Oh."

Randall coughed, and put his feet up on the railing, and listened to the clicking of the rail notches, and watched the dusky world slip by on either side and the white moon come up twice her normal size, as the train shot away into the heart of the dying sun.

"Well, now that we've reformed, tell me something about Wharton," he began, at length.

"What do you want to know?"

"Anything. First, how long you have been there."

"Last year was my first. It is a strange place. They've invented three hundred and seven new blue laws there in addition to the code of 1620. But

it's funny—the place gets you somehow. I had no intentions of coming back. I said so last spring with repeated emphasis. And here I am going out alone, after deciding to go at the last minute, and having to take a room with a Senior in the Dorm. It's going to be a sweet life for me. I can't explain it, but it pulls you back. I'm afraid you won't like it much. Please tell me why you are going there this year. You are not a Freshman, are you?"

"Hardly, no. I'm to assist the football coach."

"I wish you would be serious."

"I wish you would realize that I am serious."

"Am I to believe, then, that a member of the Wharton faculty is flirting with a helpless Sophomore?"

"Which part of that question do you consider the more important? Is the accent on faculty member or on flirting?"

"Both."

"Yes, then, to whichever part you prefer. But only one, mind, not both."

"Will you teach anything besides football?"

"No. I've got to learn some things myself. I have still twenty-six hours to work off for an A. B."

"That's tough. I was going to elect a course under you."

"Well, I might try to get that course in by special arrangement. A class of one, meeting several times a week."

She seemed to ignore this remark, and asked, "Where did you go last year?"

"Princeton."

"You did? Now I know where I saw your picture. You're my kid brother's idol. He used to send me clippings of the Princeton team. He's in prep school training for Princeton. They call you 'Trixy' MacRae, don't they? Why?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Why do you suppose they called you Nita?"

"But there is generally a reason for a nickname."

"They never explained the reason for mine to me."

"Stupid!"

"Was stupid of them, wasn't it?"

"You're impossible."

"Anything else? I like your compliments."

Quietly he took one of her hands that toyed with a pair of gloves and drew her nearer. He had done this with a hundred other similar hands. It meant nothing to him. But he might have known from the pulse beat in hers that it meant something to her: that Nita Carlsen had received her first hard jolt. He was just having another good time. There were three hours before Pullman bedtime. He had to fill them in somehow. This was a pleasant way.

To her, those three hours were the sudden fulfilment of her dreams. They brought the sweetest dream of all, and she burrowed her black head in the Pullman linen after his "good-night" and tried to continue the dream.

"Oh, kid," she said to herself, as she drifted off to that semiconscious state which is Pullman sleep, "he's a dear."

MacRae walked forward to the "Brookhaven." As he sat in "Lower 5" and went through the gymnastic feat of undressing in bed, he laughed to himself and crooned a popular song gaily in an undertone that could not be heard above the sound of rolling wheels.

"Pretty snappy jane, that," he reflected between the syncopated lines of "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby." "Some eyes—and I don't mean maybe," he improvised.

Then somehow the disturbing image returned. It always did about dream time. It was a girl at a grand piano, a different kind of girl. This girl had done something to him, something that bound him to her. And yet they had never even spoken to each other.

He lay awake and listened to the rain of cinders on the roof of the car, steady and sharp as the sound of hail. The long sad wail of the locomotive whistle always made him feel strange when he heard it at night. It gave him the curious impression that he had lived in another existence. He tried to figure that out for awhile and then found himself muttering, "I'll be seeing you soon, Fay."

When the last berth was made up, the car light was switched off, and the "Quiet" sign became an unnecessary appendage at the end of the car. It would

become useful once more some day hanging above a college professor's chair.

"Alabam" Nevers began to dig for shoes at the bottom of a narrow green chasm. He was thinking about Josie of 115 South Senator Street, and humming his favorite spiritual:

> "I gotta shoes,
> You gotta shoes,
> All o' God's chillun gotta shoes."

At the Wallingford grade crossing a 1920 Ford came to a jerky stop as a thing of fire and steel thundered past, going westward. Josiah Peel extracted an ancient but honorable timepiece from his vest pocket and by the light of the white moon gravely moved the long hand ahead two minutes. Then he pushed the clutch pedal down to the vibrating floor-board, opened the gas lever several notches, and sputtered up across the tracks before the third section of the "Century" should reach the crossing.

CHAPTER FOUR

Randall dressed and shaved carefully, and met Nita in the "Lenora" one-half hour later, as he had arranged to do. Some of the berths were not yet made up. Moving bulges in the green curtains suggested the image of some fat person within, wrestling with his clothes.

It had turned out to be a gray, dull day with rain threatening.

They walked forward to the dining-car and ate waffles swamped in melted butter and maple syrup. Nita was full of life. She was as fascinating in the morning as she had been at night. The conversation was animated, and when, one hour later, they swung off in Chicago, Randall regretted the interruption.

They jounced across town in the Parmelee transfer bus, provided for on their through ticket, wandered idly around the Northwestern Station for half an hour, and then boarded the curious train of yellow cars for Wharton.

The last lap was a little tense. Nita could not refrain from manifesting an excited anticipation at returning. Randall was frankly interested in the thought of the dump to which he was confining himself for a while.

When finally they passed the little College Ave-

nue station, Nita pointed out the tower-crowned rise which Midwesterners called a hill. The white limestone showed grimly above the tall trees, but the dullness of the morning filmed its true beauty in gray light. At Wharton Station the train, with a screeching grind, came to a stop. Several other young people stumbled with their baggage down the steps of different cars. Nita recognized a couple of acquaintances and waved to them. None of them seemed to be close friends of hers.

Randall's hands were full. In one he held his Gladstone bag and his trumpet case, with his ukelele case stuck under his arm. In the other he carried his own suitcase, and Nita's. A smaller band-box she herself carried. They headed for a taxi stand.

"Aren't you going to walk?" she asked, mildly.

"No;" he muttered over his shoulder. "I'm not starting football training yet." And as they reached a cab, he dumped the stuff on the ground, helped her in, and snapped his command to the driver. When the door clamped shut, a drop of rain spat against the glass. He noticed it, pointed it out, and said smilingly, "Aren't you going to walk?"

She feigned to ignore the question.

"I don't know what Ma Carwell will say if she sees me driving up with the assistant coach." She seemed really worried.

"And how will she know who I am?"

"I hadn't thought of that, which only makes it worse. She might think we are engaged." She laughed at the thought.

"Horrible! Oh, most horrible! We must not let her make such a gross mistake, at least so soon." He was totally unconscious of the effect of his words. "I'll get out before we reach the Dorm. K. O.?" He had a habit of reversing the slang abbreviation.

"No. I like to give her problems to figure out. You might even come in and let me introduce you, in case she doesn't see you through the office window. She will be watching, you know."

"I shall be delighted."

"No doubt. Especially when you ask her for permission to conduct that special class you mentioned."

Randall had forgotten that. It troubled him to think that she would not let him forget it, but he asked,

"Will I have to ask for permission?"

"I'm wondering just what sort of category you will fall into. You will be a curious centaur, half man, half horse—I mean half coach."

"Do you mean to suggest that to be a coach one must be a horse?"

"No; not necessarily. But they are, quite frequently, you know. That's the 'Y' House, where some of the boys stay. No, that one on the corner."

"It looks like it."

"Like what?"

"The Shambles. Excuse me, I mean like a place in which several young men raise whoopee."

"But they really study there. That's quite a good bunch compared to the fourth-floor gang. Where will you room?"

"They wrote something about staying in the Gym. Do they have rooms in that?"

"No. I guess they have arranged for you to sleep on the foul line under the east basket, silly!"

"Don't get fresh. I just thought it was rather funny. I never heard of rooming in a Gym before."

"They have a couple of rooms there besides the Lit Society halls. The football captain rooms in one of them. He and his roomy do the janitor work of the building. That's how we subsidize our athletes."

"Hm, that's interesting. What sort of chap is he?"

Just then the taxi bounced into the entrance to the campus drive, and Nita spied a couple of her boy friends and waved frantically. They gave a hilarious return greeting, shook each other's hands, and said to each other, "I told you so," and began to sing loudly, "How you gonna keep 'em down on the farm?" Unfortunately, she did not see this bit of good-natured pantomimic satire.

The drizzle had begun to fall in damp earnest. Here and there a slickered figure sauntered across the campus paths. They passed the Main Building and stopped before the somber form of Red Castle,

a brick building that housed many of the girls and was more properly called the Ladies' Hall.

Randall helped Nita out, dismissed the cab, and carried her baggage inside. The Dean of Women was not in her office. Girls flitted cheerily and busily through the central corridor. The bustle of arriving excitement was here. A clatter of dishes and rattle of silver sounded in the dining hall, of which he had a glimpse through a half-open door. A couple of girls rushed up to Nita and each gave her a breath-taking hug and kiss. Randall stood idly twirling his hat.

"You darling kid!" one of them cried. "I knew you'd come back." After a moment of excited and enthusiastic babble Nita introduced them to the stranger, Mr. MacRae. He acknowledged them with courteous formality and began to take his leave.

As the door closed behind him he heard a smothered voice: "Where did you pick him up? 66!" The latter numeral stood for something in Dorm code resembling a rapid flutter of the heart. Of course, he did not know that, but the question made him smile and think, "Just the same the world over." He lifted his baggage and started across the campus for the Main Building.

He looked first for the Registrar and learned that he could be reached only at the end of that waiting line that stretched halfway down the hall. The young people lounged impatiently against the walls and looked over their schedules. Now and

then a wise crack would bring a burst of laughter. He overheard one of them. It was a little crude.

One of the boys pointed to a rather homely girl who had just passed around the corner and was descending the stairs, and said, "Look at that girl; she's as pretty as she can be."

"Yeh," sighed the other, "there are a lot of girls on this campus in that same fix."

Randall found the Treasurer's office tied up in a similar manner; so he approached one of the students who looked as if he held a position of some importance.

"Say, Bud, can you direct me to my room? It's supposed to be in the Gym, I guess."

"Sure, c'mon." He grabbed MacRae's suitcase and started across to another brick structure, half-hidden by trees, not far from the Main Building.

"You're not in with Bruce, are you?" he asked on the way over.

"Bruce who?"

"Wendell, football captain."

"No. Mine's a single room, I guess."

"Oh, I know. You're the new coach, eh?"

"Not exactly. I'm going to help Griffiths with his backfield, if I can."

"Boy! it's all over the campus about your coming. MacRae—that's the name, isn't it? We're looking for big things this year."

He led the way into the rather dismal entry. A permanent sign on the billboard read "No Smoking."

Randall realized that was just what he wanted—a cigarette. This was going to be tough. He followed through the banner and trophy room to the place where he was to sleep and study. It looked uninviting. It was barren as a half-finished house. The plaster on the high walls had been patched in places; a bed with a dusty mattress, two straight-backed chairs, a bureau, and a study table completed the furnishings. He had never slept more than a night or two in such a hole. This was to be permanent. He was jarred from his disgruntled reverie by the voice of his guide.

"If you need anything, look me up. Martin's the name. I'll be over in the hall most of the afternoon." The speaker was serious enough, and sincerely anxious to be helpful, but the words struck MacRae as keen irony. "If you need anything!"

When Martin left, MacRae sat down on the edge of the bare mattress, pushed back his felt hat, took out his ukelele, and began singing to a strummed accompaniment the old, old St. Louis Blues:

> "Feelin' tomorrow
> Jest lak Ah feel today—"

He had an uncanny ability to imitate the real negro blues and their subtle syncopation. He slipped from this into something less mournful, and then to a crooning waltz that stirred his blood and soothed his nerves. Finishing the soft melody, he tossed the uke

aside and rose to stretch himself, with a loud yawn that "ah-ed" up and down the scale.

When he turned to take off his coat, he saw a figure standing in the doorway. The strong, manly face broke into an expansive smile.

"How about another number?" queried the stranger. "You can sure tickle that uke."

"I've played my complete repertoire," laughed MacRae. "But come in and enjoy the luxury of a real seat." He motioned toward one of the chairs, while he took in at a glance the appearance of his visitor. He was tall and heavy, stood with hands in his pockets, and wore a white sport shirt open at the collar. He had blond hair, and the strong-lined features of the man who has fought his way through life since boyhood. There was the suggestion of a deep melancholy in the blue eyes and the same note in his low, unmusical voice. It even lurked behind his laugh.

He took a step forward and, pulling his right hand out of his pocket, extended it.

"My name's Wendell," he said.

MacRae took it with a "Glad to know you, Wendell; mine's MacRae." They shook hands solemnly, with the firm grip that men use, looking each other in the eye, and knowing not that their handshake was really the sporting gesture that opponents use before a combat.

"You're the football captain, I understand," Mac-

Rae went on. "What are the prospects this year?"

"Well, with a Princeton back added to our large coaching staff of one Wharton graduate, I think we ought to do something with the schedule, for a change."

"I hope you are not depending on me to make much of a change. Carrying a ball is one thing; teaching a chap to carry it is another."

"I know that, but I have a hunch you can teach it as well as you do it, and from all reports that's pretty well."

MacRae liked his frank compliment. He felt a little surprised that this fellow should be so nearly his own age. Evidently he had stayed out of school too. He found out later that he had; but, unlike MacRae's two years of travel with a private tutor after graduation from prep school, this man had worked in a Cape Breton coal mine. He had as his reward a crushed big toe and a body of live steel. MacRae noticed the slight twist in the right foot as he walked out.

It was almost noon. He decided to wander downtown for lunch before he did any more. He pulled a slicker out of his suitcase and stepped out into the gray dampness in the direction of the station.

The campus was rather small. He could see all around it from the front of the Main Building. There were only three or four buildings other than the three he had been in already. And there was

a little wooden observatory, which he learned later to call "The Lemon." Around the campus were many modest, but comfortable homes.

As he walked he could not help mentally contrasting this scene with the familiar and beloved sights of Princeton: its long-vistaed walks; its noble Gothic arches and towers; its stone, slate-roofed dorms; its stately cathedral chapel; old ivy-covered Nassau; and his own richly furnished suite in Blair, with an open fireplace, and the luxury he had always known. It made him sick with longing, sick with disappointment—this uncultured, little Midwestern hill with its severe Norman tower, and its tall elms, and rude buildings.

And then, suddenly, the reason for his being in that particular place occurred to him. He had forgotten *her* in the general rush of his arrival. He wondered when he would see her, and his blood raced. What if he should meet her on the street? He looked at his reflection in a shop window, pulled his hat a bit lower over the right eye, and turned into Front Street with a new vigor in his step.

He stopped at a place with the uninteresting designation, "Wharton Restaurant," in its windows. The food turned out to be rather tasteless; but he was hungry and made the best of it.

Following lunch, he took a walk about the business section of the town, all covered in fifteen minutes; and yet in that small section he noted three A & P stores. A single theater had the monopoly

of the movie trade. A few butcher shops, barber shops, drug stores, haberdasheries, music stores, and jewelry stores almost completed the assortment. On opposite corners stood rival ice cream parlors, one familiarly known as "The Greek's," the victor in the contest for college trade until the proprietor of the other invested some money in putting a row of booths along his wall also. Then business balanced up, and even began to shift its position gradually. The Italian found that booths were a good investment in a college town, a coeducational college town.

But the town boasted, in addition to these, one department store. It had two departments, one on the main floor and the other in the basement. After MacRae had directed his trunks to the Gymnasium, he opened an account at the Gray-Wharton Bank, cashed some of his deposit, and visited the department store. He selected a Morris chair, a lampstand, a desk lamp, three rugs, a bookcase, and two pairs of heavy curtains of a gray and gold design that harmonized with his rugs. These were to be delivered at once to the Gymnasium.

He started for the campus, but on the way passed a music store and was forced to turn back. For a time he stood debating before the window; then went in and ordered a moderately priced radio sent up to his room. He had to have music. Thus it was he answered the inner voice of his Scotch ancestry.

He reached the Main Building about two o'clock

and decided to see the President at once if he could. The place was abustle with life, riotous with sound. Everywhere reunited groups talked excitedly, backs were slapped with painful force, hands were shaken, girls laughed, voices hummed, feet scraped on the composition stairway. A little semicircle had gathered about the bulletin board. New arrivals came in from time to time. They would yell to some friend across the crowded hall, "Hi, boy! You old snipe!"

MacRae watched with interest the joyous faces, and felt lonely, separate from it all. Not a single friend to welcome him! This was a hundred times worse than returning to Princeton with his class gone. There he would at least have had many friends in the lower classes. He kept continual watch for a girl with brown hair and brown eyes.

When he turned eventually into the President's office, he found that three persons were ahead of him, waiting in the anteroom for interviews. He took a seat, as the secretary suggested, and felt ill at ease. Through the door to the main office could be heard, during a lull in the outside noise, the sound of voices. Once there was a gay little laugh that delighted him. It was like a faery laugh in another world. It sounded so far off. He began to study the others ahead of him in line. Two of them were young men, one quite apparently a Freshman, who fingered his cap and fidgeted with nervousness. The girl sat reading a book of poetry. Once in a while she would lay it down and look at the wall above

MacRae's head as if she were pondering a particularly beautiful metaphor. The secretary tapped diligently at the typewriter.

Then suddenly the President's door opened. MacRae kept his seat with difficulty. Out of it came Fay Thurston. With an adorable smile she took in the waiting group, and addressed the girl with the book of poetry.

"Hello, Fran. Awfully good to see you again. Sorry I kept you waiting so long. Prexy's ready for you." She held the door open for the other girl, crossed to the secretary's desk, and gave her a piece of paper.

"Honey, can you do that for me? Are you terribly busy? You are, aren't you?"

The secretary looked up and was forced to laugh at the sparkle in the dark eyes.

"When do you want it?"

"Well, let me see, tomorrow morning, at the latest."

"All right, Fay, I'll try."

"Oh, thank you, Billy. You should turn me down sometimes. I do take such awful advantage of your good nature." She opened the outer door and let in the hubbub of the hall.

MacRae sat motionless. Mentally he was rising and walking beside her; he was touching her hair with his fingers, whispering that it was heaven to see her again. But his body sat there. The door closed.

He did not know how long he waited after that.

The voice of the secretary brought him back to reality.

"Mr. MacRae, the President will see you now."

He walked into the large, well-lighted room, and saw a tall, white-haired figure rise behind the great oak desk. MacRae could never forget that interview. It introduced him to a personality that was to leave its compelling impress on his life.

Dr. Charles A. Brainard had been president of the school for forty years. Before the call to fill his father's chair as president, he had taught for twelve years in the same school. In those fifty-two years he had seen it grow from its one little building to a hill thronging with young people. Now, at the age of seventy-five, he continued to brood over the life of the institution with a quiet, humble spirit, a sympathetic heart, a lofty mind, and a noble Christian life.

As he rose, MacRae took in rapidly the striking characteristics of the man. He was dressed in simple black, with a black bow tie knotted loosely at the starched white collar. He thought he had never seen a more finely shaped head. It was crowned with white hair. It was a regal head. It was made to rule. You felt humble in the presence of its majesty. The face was all benignity. The large, deep eyes were surrounded by numberless little wrinkles that were never formed by frowns but by smiles. The left eyebrow was slightly higher than the right, giving the impression of a placid spirit that nothing

could ruffle. The eyelids had a somewhat tired droop. A white mustache hid the upper lip, but the strong firmness of the lower was visible.

When he spoke, it was with a voice that would always live in your memory. It was soft, quiet, musical, slow.

He stretched out his hand across the desk as MacRae approached it.

"Good afternoon, young man," he said. "I don't think I have met you before, have I?"

"No, sir. I'm MacRae, who wrote to you about completing my course this year and assisting your coach."

"So? We are glad to have you this year, MacRae. Sit down." He motioned to the armchair before the desk and sat down himself behind it. "I was sorry to hear of your father's death. It is unfortunate that you cannot finish at Princeton, but God's ways are far above our ways. His wisdom is infinite. He sees the end from the beginning."

MacRae started at the mention of his father. He regretted that letter now. This wasn't the kind of man you lied to. But he did not have time to deliberate. The sympathetic voice was asking him a question.

"Have you registered yet?"

"No, sir. I thought I had better see you first. I'm pretty ignorant of the procedure here and——"

"So you are. Well, what is your major? I forget."

"English, sir."

"Good. See Professor Stone, across the hall, and get him to go over your schedule. Then you will find the Registrar on the next floor. Have you met Coach Griffiths yet?"

"No, Doctor, I have not."

"I want you to get in touch with him. He is in the third house from the campus on Irving Avenue. He will give you whatever information you may need in regard to the athletic work. You might see him tonight. You know, of course, that our requirements differ somewhat from those you have been used to."

"I shall probably soon learn them. But, sir, just what will be my status here?"

There was a noticeable twinkle in the President's eye as he answered, "Well, you will be a student, and will be classed as such, a Senior."

"I will be subject to the various rules then?"

"You will, yes, all of them."

"Thank you, sir." MacRae rose to go. "It has been good to meet you." Dr. Brainard rose also as he left.

"Come in again, MacRae. I want to talk to you about Princeton," he said. In all of his speech there seemed a great weariness, not of discouragement, but the tired quietness of one who has come a long, long journey and needs rest. He prepared to meet the next in line.

Randall crossed to the rhetoric and logic room.

Here another surprising personality sat before an open roll-top desk, fingering a card index. The swivel chair leaned forward crazily, and he sat with feet firmly planted on the floor. His broad back and thatched gray head greeted MacRae coldly as he came in. He stood for a minute behind the tweed-clothed back before the head turned slowly and looked at him over a pair of rimless nose-glasses. A quizzical expression was in the eyes. "Well, what do you want?" they seemed to say. Every motion was deliberate. He took off the glasses.

"Dr. Stone?" asked MacRae.

The heavy gray mustache lifted forebodingly and emitted a drawled, "Yes," that had as much of question as of answer in it.

"I was directed to see you about my schedule."

The swivel chair did a squeaky pivot, but retained its crazy forward tilt as Professor Stone turned about with his hands resting on his knees. He was a man of abounding vitality. MacRae was to learn that he was almost as old as the President, though his hair and mustache were still steel gray, and the calves of his legs as heavy and strong as those of a plow-following farmer. He made a funny noise with his mouth before he spoke, and his eyes seemed to dance with a suppressed merriment.

"Freshman?"

"No, sir. I lack twenty-six hours for graduation. I was unable to return to Princeton this year."

"Hm—you major in English, I take it."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, look this over." He handed MacRae a long printed schedule of the courses offered. "Put a circle around those you want and I'll check it up with you."

Something about the homely, honest, half-genial, half-stern face attracted him.

"Sir, I would like to take your course in Logic, if I may." He remembered that Nita had told him it was reputed to be the best course in school, even though it was one of the most difficult. She was going to try and get in it herself this year.

"We have room for a few more," drawled Dr. Stone. He put out his hand for the schedule and scrawled his O. K. and initials, D. A. S., beside the circled "Logic."

"You take two semester hours of Bible here, you know, in addition to your regular requirements. Eight hours are required for graduation, but we must make exception for those who have transferred credits."

MacRae did not know that.

He learned many things that afternoon; and when finally his schedule was made out, his registration completed, and his arrangement with the Treasurer over, he stopped for a moment before the bulletin board on the way to his room. There were several notices of the usual sort. Three of them attracted his special attention. One of them

announced the opening of the dining hall with dinner that evening at six. It was now four. Another said there would be a Faculty Reception for the new students, the following evening at eight o'clock, in Lower Chapel. A third issued a call for all football candidates to meet in the Gym the next afternoon at three-fifteen sharp.

He made a mental note of them, and hurried off to change in two hours a four-walled barracks into what he knew would be a rather comfortable room.

CHAPTER FIVE

At three-fifteen the next day MacRae stepped into the dressing room. It was full of young men scraping around at a pile of togs. He watched them for a moment, listened to the uproar of their voices, then took a seat on one of the benches and leaned back against a locker. Wendell came and sat beside him. Just then the door was flung open and framed in it, a short, stocky figure stood looking at the familiar scene through heavy-lensed eye glasses. A great shout went up.

"Shorty!"

"Gentlemen," he said, raising his hand with the mock imperialism of a famous character beckoning for silence. Instead, the motion brought a wave of jeers. He smiled with the satisfaction of one who has achieved his end. When the noise diminished, he crossed the floor to shake hands with one of the chaps known as "Duke" Conway.

The latter, after a hearty greeting began: "Did you——"

"Yea;" interrupted Shorty with a grin of feigned boredom, "Yea, I had a good time."

For three years this near-sighted little quarterback had piloted the scrubs against the varsity. He had never made his letter. He never would. But

he would always be out—mud, or snow, or shine—to buck the first team and batter them into shape against his perseverance and pluck. Now his clever anticipation of the usual reunion question by the usual reunion reply brought a burst of laughter, amid which Coach Griffiths entered. He took in the scene.

"Get away from that stuff, you birds!" he bellowed. "Think this is a cafeteria? Sit down!" He had been in the Marines during the World War and had retained the hardness of voice and manner there acquired.

They sat down. MacRae smiled inwardly. He knew this type of coach. He was the slave driver, the type that produced football teams by sheer force. He would never lead, but always drive. "I can't do that," thought MacRae.

Griffiths was looking carefully round the room, sizing up his material. It looked encouraging. Forty men of various sizes, most of them heavy.

"First," he began in his brusque way, "I want you to meet 'Trixy' MacRae of Princeton fame. By a stroke of fortune for us, misfortune for MacRae, we're going to have him with us this year to give you backs something to think about. MacRae!"

There was a loud roar of applause as MacRae rose to his feet. He had the typically faulty stance of the football player—hands in his pockets, feet wide apart, head a little forward.

"I appreciate the welcome I have received here,

fellows," he said. "I did my best for Princeton. I'll do my best for Wharton." MacRae sat down.

It was one of those short speeches that affect men curiously. Perfectly simple, abruptly honest, and clear as the call of a bugle, it set aflame the pent-up enthusiasm ever ready for a torch. Griffiths knew by the cheers that he was off to a big season. He could feel it. These boys would fight. The coach spoke again:

"I want the names of you new men—names, ages, positions you have played, and where. Sign up on this sheet. The rest of you come over here for your duffle."

The afternoon was spent in handing out uniforms, fitting shoes and helmets, and pants and jerseys. There were miniature brawls begun over certain articles of apparel, but these were generally cut short in the earliest stage by the stentorian voice of Griffiths. The meeting closed with a sharp announcement: "Three-fifteen at the field, tomorrow. That's all."

MacRae went back to his room and watched the gang dribble out. He looked them over. "Not a bad bunch," he thought.

Supper-time found him, carefully dressed, crossing the dusky campus to Red Castle. The lobby was full of laughter and the hum of speech. The girls collected mostly around the lower stair landing. When the bell rang they led the way into the dining hall. It was a large room, seating about two

hundred and fifty, almost half of the school. They drifted noisily to their places and stood waiting.

A tinkle of a bell at the Dean's table brought a perfect stillness. Laughs were cut short, snickers choked back, sentences left unfinished, and the voice of one of the students returning thanks to God for the food was alone heard. Then came a wide scraping of chairs and the pleasant sound of many voices again taking up the conversation.

Simple fare it was, but well-cooked and wholesome—meat loaf, rice, and tomatoes.

MacRae ate slowly, talked with the unattractive girl at his right, and the jolly, fat, tub of a fellow at his left, and kept his eyes roving about the room, looking for a figure.

He had seen her only twice since that hurried glance in the President's office—once at breakfast and once in a class in modern British poetry, which met at nine A.M. This was six P.M. He looked carefully. There was no sign of her. She must be behind him. Just his luck!

The conversation in his quarter had dwindled and languished. He freshened it with a leading question or two and continued to study the colorful, happy crowd. They, at least, seemed to be enjoying their confinement. He wondered about it. There was a light-heartedness here, a wholesome humor, a relaxing geniality, that he had never met with before.

Girls waited on the tables. One of them slipped

before she reached the kitchen door with a trayful of dishes. They fell with a crash that made everyone jump nervously, and then laugh involuntarily.

"She's off to a good start," said the fellow across from MacRae. "I think her record last year was one hundred and six plates besides numerous other pieces of china. She tries to take too much out at once, poor kid."

MacRae felt sorry for her.

When the meal was over, many of the young people lingered in the parlor to talk together, or sing around the piano. As he was passing the door of the room he heard someone call,

"Oh Fay, play something for us, won't you?"

From the wide stairs he heard,

"Sorry, Jean. I'm busy tonight."

And MacRae was terribly sorry.

Another girl sat at the piano after much coaxing, and soon the parlor was filled with the harmony of the spontaneous music of youth. These young people loved to sing. He could tell that. Even couples over on the window seats, in the first throes of infatuation, were singing while they watched each other.

Up in Room 211, a pretty corner suite, Nita Carlsen was whistling gaily and humming alternately, with little jazzy breaks, and da-da-das, and snapping of fingers, when her roommate entered. She stopped abruptly.

"Hello," she said, a lovely little inflection ris-

ing and falling on the "o." "Wasn't that a perfectly awful meal?"

Fay Thurston laughed.

"It wasn't bad. Think of the starving Armenians."

"I don't need to think; I am one. Say, are you going to the reception tonight?"

"Yes, are you?"

"I think I will. What are you going to wear?"

And within the next half-hour, in nearly every room of the Dorm, that question was being asked.

About eight o'clock they began to drift into the Lower Chapel, a large room rendered cozy by means of a few lounges and chairs around the walls, some soft carpets, dim lamps, and drooping ferns.

At each of the two entrances stood a couple who saw that everyone received a small square of paper and a pin. On the paper was to be written the name of the person, with his or her address, and this was to be pinned on lapel or dress. It was a method devised for self-introduction. Informal it was.

By eight-thirty the room was as crowded as a subway car. It was a herd constantly milling and moving. You spoke to everyone and shook hands. You met the President and his wife; the faculty's various types; here a girl from New York; there one from Georgia, with a soft drawl that made you think of white pines in a wind; there a fellow from Michigan; there a little Japanese; there a missionary's son from China.

MacRae had never realized that a small college could draw its student body from such distant corners of the earth. This was certainly a cosmopolitan group. The place was becoming oppressively hot and stuffy.

Then he saw Nita Carlsen—dressed in baby blue; her dark hair darker by contrast—edging toward him through the crowd, and leading by the hand another girl, a girl in a gray gown with a splash of purple on her left shoulder. Before he had time to swallow and clear his throat she was beside him.

"Hello, you," she called. "I've been telling my roommate all about you, and I want you to meet her. This is Fay Thurston: Mr. MacRae."

Randall had waited weeks for this; but now that the moment was here his usual confident ease left him. Instead of looking at the little white slip of paper pinned on her dress, as he had been doing with the others all evening, he looked straight into her eyes.

"I'm glad to meet you, Miss Thurston. You don't know me, of course, but I know you."

Her voice seemed as musical as her fingers were on a keyboard.

"Why, how can that be? It does seem as if I have seen you somewhere?"

"Well, you looked past me several times last summer." He laughed, and relieved a little of his tenseness. He was struggling hard for control, for nonchalance.

"Last summer?"

"Yes, in the Brooklyn tent."

"Oh, really? Isn't that a coincidence! We had a great time there, didn't we?"

"Fine," he agreed, although he did not refer to the same experience.

Nita was becoming uncomfortable. This was unexpected. She had dragged her fanatically religious roommate up to meet MacRae just as an excuse to approach him without seeming to seek him for herself. She hadn't expected them to ignore her this way. She wondered what MacRae had ever been doing in a tent meeting. She couldn't picture him there. They were still talking. She backed away gracefully.

"See you later, Fay," she said, and was immediately besieged by three Freshmen clamoring to read her name and address on the slip, and eager to watch at closer range her lips move and her eyes sparkle as she spoke.

Fay was asking him the question he dreaded.

"How did you happen to come to Wharton this year?"

Since that chat with the President he had had time to improve his story. It now ran like this:

"Well, I played my three years at Princeton and most of my friends graduated last June. Then my funds gave out and I was offered a position here."

It sounded comical in his own ears. He should be telling this girl the truth, but not here in this

crowd. He should be telling her that he had followed her to Wharton because he loved her, as he had never dreamed he could love. She looked more beautiful than ever this night as she stood close to him in the crowded room. She did not have a doll's beauty, but she had a real loveliness. Her skin was rose-petal in the dim, colored light. Her hair rippled away from her high, white forehead. There were little lights in it, like the first touches of red in the russet of autumn leaves. He found himself asking a foolish question:

"Where did you go after you left Brooklyn?"

"Oh, we were in Philadelphia for three weeks, and then I went home for a little rest before coming back here."

He looked for the first time at the slip of paper pinned on her dress. It was written with delightful grace. Everything about this girl appealed to him. It read: California.

"Your home is in California?" It was another silly question.

"Yes; Dad has been teaching in the Bible Institute since his return from Japan. I was born in Japan, you know."

He did not know it. It impressed him.

"How long did you live there?"

"Until I was twelve. My aunt took care of me through high school days in Los Angeles."

"You must know a good deal about Japan then."

"I know that I love it."

Suddenly he realized that he had not yet told her what he had meant to tell her often in the tent at Brooklyn.

"This hasn't anything to do with Japan, but I want to tell you how I love your music. I shall never forget it."

"Thank you." Her eyes glowed at his earnest compliment. "I hope He can use it to His own glory," she added quietly.

MacRae was embarrassed at the perfect humility of the girl. It was not an expression with her. There was something about the way she said "He" and "His" which made you know that they were capitalized and could refer only to the one majestic Person who seemed to hold her heart's complete devotion. This wasn't the kind of fanaticism you could laugh at. He could only say,

"I'm sure He will." He found it difficult to utter that pronoun with the reverence she had used. But he tried.

She was looking about and nodding to various people.

"It's just great to be back. I hate to think of leaving Wharton. What do you think of the place?"

"I don't think much of the place, but I do think there's an awfully nice gang here."

"That's what I meant, of course. You see, that's what makes Wharton. It isn't the buildings."

Just then there was a clapping of someone's hands, and the chairman of the entertainment com-

mittee stood waiting for quiet. At first MacRae was angry at the interruption, then he was glad. The voice said:

"Our first number on the program this evening will be a piano solo by Fay Thurston."

"Excuse me," she said to MacRae.

" 'Bye," he whispered as she slipped off through the narrow lane made for her passing.

She had no self-consciousness as she walked forward. Reaching the piano, she turned and faced the semicircular crowd.

"This isn't quite the atmosphere for Bach," she smiled. "I think it might be better to introduce the new folks to some of the Wharton songs."

As she sat down MacRae's mind traveled back to a Brooklyn tent platform. This was a different scene. The music brought him suddenly again to the present.

It began with a marching battle-cry that had such a pounding rhythm that new students could not fail to catch it quickly, and such a long association with Wharton grid battles that it made the old ones feel like shouting the words:

> "Come on Wharton!
> Come on Wharton!
> Plunge right through that line!"

But they did not shout. They listened and thrilled with the excited and quickened pulse of a crowd hearing the martial beat of a great band. MacRae

had always been of the opinion that there was never another song quite so peppy, quite so dazzling and spirited, as the old

"Going back,
Going back,
Going back to old Nassau."

But, as he listened, he felt the power of a new spirit pulsing through him.

Following the thunderous close of each song there was a flight of graded music stairs, steps of soft-carpeted transition chords, that led you to a new melody of triumphant and vigorous challenge.

"Hail to the Orange, Hail to the Blue," sang the old students silently.

The medley lasted about ten minutes. The closing number in it was a torrent of rhythm. MacRae had never heard anything quite like it in the way of college songs.

"That's the 'Laureata,'" Willis said, poking him in the ribs. "Colburn wrote it last year. Some piece, eh?"

He could only grunt an excited, "I'll say so," in reply.

Fay Thurston had strong fingers for all their delicate appearance. She played with a brilliance that is not commonly attained by the feminine hand. The last chord died away in a blast of applause that rose swiftly and lasted long.

She bowed her appreciation and moved away, only

to be brought back by the incessant clapping. When it ceased, she said,

"I know you all want to sing one. What will it be?"

There was a confused spatter of sounds, but above them all "The Laureata!" seemed to predominate. She recited the words slowly for the benefit of the new students. Then she sat down again and struck the opening bars. They all sang. They drowned the piano in the volume of their voices.

There was something contagious about the spirit here. MacRae had intended to be cynical, critical. Small college stuff it would be. Small college stuff it was! And he felt as if it were the spirit of an eight-oar shell rowing against a fifty-oar galley. It permeated him; filled him with a new sense of the power in a song to unite a group of people.

She did not come back to him, of course. The rest of the brief program did not interest him much. He did enjoy the quiet speech of President Brainard, who welcomed the new students with such a gentle cordiality that they loved him at once.

There were a few games; then refreshments. MacRae tried to get near Fay to eat his ice cream and cake, but he saw that Wendell was there ahead of him. He answered instead the invitation in Nita's eyes.

"Awfully exciting, wasn't it?" she said sarcastically, as he came up.

"I guess it wasn't intended to be a night club

opening," he rejoined, sitting down beside her on a folding chair he had brought with him. "At least, I'm enjoying the novelty of it. Say, that's a fine girl you have for a roommate," he ended abruptly.

"She is nice, isn't she? Trouble is she is too nice. I was stuck in with her in order to benefit by her example, I suppose. She is sweet to me though. You ought to hear that girl play jazz. She can just make your feet go wild. But she won't play it any more except on rare occasions. We have to beg and beg her. Wasn't it funny that you should have seen her this summer? She earns part of her way through school playing at those summer conferences. I like her a lot, but I don't see what kick she gets out of life living like an old woman before she is twenty-one."

While she was talking MacRae studied Fay across the room. He watched Bruce Wendell and saw something in his eyes and actions that startled him. He evidently adored the girl. He made no attempt to conceal the fact. It was only natural. He might have known he could not be the only one to have fallen in love with her. He spoke his thoughts before he had a chance to check himself.

"Does she go steady with anyone?"

"Bruce Wendell has been chasing her for three years, I'm told. I guess they are practically engaged."

His ice cream became suddenly tasteless after that.

He forced himself to eat it. This was something he hadn't figured on. He had taken a leap in the dark; and now it certainly was dark. He suddenly appreciated the significance in that handshake yesterday, and he began to wonder what position Wendell played on the team.

The evening broke up with the singing of the "Alma Mater." He walked over to the Dorm with Nita, trying to respond to her gay witticisms; but he was glad when he saw her inside and said "Goodnight" hurriedly.

He walked across the campus in the full moonlight. It gleamed silver on the slate roof of the Main Building and turned the limestone tower to ghostly white. The world was gray-green and silver. He loved the moonlight, but tonight it was a spotlight that did not fit his mood.

He passed Wendell's window on his way to the Gym door and heard him singing in his deep bass. Evidently he had just come in, since he passed the window taking off his topcoat.

MacRae went on to his own room and undressed with that mental abstraction which so often accompanies the process. Here was a problem. He certainly could not give Wendell any competition until the football season was over. It might ruin his playing. He looked like the type that doesn't relish a race. This wasn't going to be funny. Some people had an idea that college was a place where a bunch of youngsters played at life. He jumped

into bed with a snort at the idea. That was all they knew about college. That was also all they knew about life.

He lay for a while trying to sleep. Then he rose with an angry fling at the blankets and lit a cigarette. He had meant to cut them out, but found he couldn't just yet. Two of them soothed his nerves, and he went back to bed.

CHAPTER SIX

MacRae awoke with a struggle when the alarm went off at seven. He washed and shaved in the dressing room, as there was no water in his own room. While he was at it Wendell and his roommate, wearing only their pajamas, came in. Wendell introduced Craig, the editor of the college paper. MacRae's face was half covered with lather, but he gave his wet hand to Craig after Wendell's introduction.

He knew as soon as he looked at him that he was going to like this short chap with the large keen eyes. MacRae watched him take off the upper part of his sleeping suit and begin to wash. While he shaved, he sang, stopping for a while when the razor went around his lips but always taking up the tune just where he had left off, as he rinsed the lather from the blade in the hot water. He was singing hymns.

Wendell was silent, almost glum. MacRae watched the muscles ripple in his back and shoulders as he bent over the basin. He looked at his own reflection in the glass. He was two inches short of Wendell's six feet. His muscles were rounded, and elastic, and firm, like a young Apollo's, but Wendell's were hard as steel. They flexed like the thews

of a horse. When he simply rinsed his face, they bulged with latent power. MacRae watched him admiringly. When he began drying his face on the rough Turkish towel, he asked Wendell what position he played.

"Tackle," he made out of the cryptic muffle from behind the towel.

"I'd like to see you at fullback," said MacRae.

"I've always wanted to carry the ball, but they've always needed me in the line more, I guess."

Behind the simple utterance lay the story of his life. Seven years of prep school and college football; seven years of opening holes for men who got the thunderous applause; seven years of constant smash and drive in the line; seven years of dragging down an opposing back for a five-yard loss, while the stands wondered, "Who got that man? Some tackle, eh?" But his teammates knew. That was why he had been reëlected captain last year. That was why the Wharton rooters, at least, were beginning to realize that Captain Bruce was the most valuable man on the team. He would always want to carry the ball. He would always dream of smashing the line for a ten-yard gain, of feeling his legs drive and his shoulders hit them low. But he would always play tackle, where the biggest work was defence and the offence wasn't seen.

But there was more than seven years of football in it. This was also his life-story:

His elder brother had received all the family

financial support. His was a brilliant mind. He was studying on his doctor's degree. Captain Bruce had worked his way, every hard cent of it. He had just flunked his college entrance exams to Yale by a few points. Following that he had heard Dr. Brainard at Old Orchard. That was why he was at Wharton, leading a Little Nineteen squad when, with the right coaching, he might have been on a Big Three team.

But there was still more in that sentence. It was three years of telling a girl how much he loved her; of living from day to day for her, to see her; and from night to night to dream of her; and yet, to play tackle always. It was taking her out to all the college functions, sitting beside her in the library annex, trying to study. It was spending upon her whatever extra dollars he could earn, and yet feeling that it was useless, being told that it was.

MacRae did not know all that was behind the heaviness of the words. He only knew they sounded tragic. He returned to his room and dressed for breakfast.

The dining hall was only half full for that meal. It was easy to spot Fay there. She would always be up, fresh and eager for the day's work. He felt that.

She was chatting with some of the girls on the landing as he came in. There were no assigned seats for breakfast and so, when the bell rang, he drifted casually to her table; and when the meal

was over, vowed he would never do it again. He did not eat enough to keep him until chapel time at ten. How can you eat cornflakes and blue milk when she is sitting across from you at the table, and even speaks to you once in a while? He felt silly, like a country schoolboy with his first budding romance. It was ridiculous. It had to stop. He was twenty-four years old. He was a man. There was no excuse for this adolescent bashfulness. No woman had ever made him bat an eye before. What was the matter with him?

He asked himself the question four times on the way over to his eight o'clock class and was still without an answer when the professor opened the hour with prayer. Could you beat that! Praying before a Latin class! He kept his eyes open and watched the teacher, who was a short little fellow with a parrot-beak nose, great ears, a bald head, mustache, and spectacles. His trousers were baggy at the knees like the flesh on his cheeks. A wizened old geezer, he thought; and yet as MacRae listened, something happened inside of him. He began to love the man. He spoke in a half-trembling voice, with an intermittent sucking at his mouth as if the saliva were bothering him; but it was the tone of his voice and the words that got MacRae. The old man's eyes were closed. He said:

"Our Heavenly Father, we praise Thee for the light of this new day, for all the possibilities it may hold for us, for these young lives gathered here

to train themselves in mind and spirit for Thy service. O bless us, we pray Thee, as we take up the study of this hour. Help us to find in the emptiness and longings of a beautiful pagan literature a void which Thou alone canst fill, and help us to see in Thy Word the only solution for the mysteries of life. This we ask, with the forgiveness of our sins, in the blessed name of our Redeemer and Lord. Amen."

Then they opened their books to the first in the collection of Pliny's letters.

And each class was like that! The "nine o'clock" was the class of the day for him. Fay was in it. Also he loved the subject: modern British poetry. They used an anthology as a textbook, with outside readings and reports.

The professor was a woman with a man's rationalizing intellect and a woman's depth of feeling. She was stout, but walked with majestic dignity. Her forehead was straight and high, overhanging strong eyes, a nose that would frequently inhale with a long sniff of disdain, or a shorter one of pleasure, and a chin firm, though double. Her hair was combed back of her ears and wound in a crown on top of her head.

First she called the roll from her cards, in a pleasing contralto voice, and then opened the hour with a brief prayer for guidance.

MacRae sat two or three rows behind Fay so

that he could watch her the whole period. That hour went quickly.

Chapel was compulsory, of course. When the ten o'clock bell rang, the whole school filed out of the Main Building. It made quite a parade. He entered it unwillingly. The New Chapel was a recent addition. It seated about nine hundred. President Brainard led the service that morning, the faculty ranged on the platform on either side of him. When he gave out the number of the first hymn, he asked, as was his invariable custom,

"Now, young people, is this hymn prayer, or praise, or testimony?" They all looked at the words and read:

> "Under His wings I am safely abiding,
> Though the night deepens and tempests are wild;
> Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me;
> He has redeemed me and I am His child."

In reply there came a scattered number of voices saying, "Testimony."

"Yes; this is testimony. Let us sing it in that way then."

And they sang it. MacRae thrilled as they sang. In Princeton some sang, but not as these young people did. The possibilities in congregational singing had never touched him before. It was always so half-hearted, so listless, so mechanical. This was the sound of happy voices, joyous, free, and clear. He joined with them.

The President read a portion of Scripture, and then made a few quiet comments on it as he stood by the side of the pulpit with his right hand on the front corner of it. No fire here, no pulpit eloquence. It was the voice of old Wisdom, the voice of all the world's teachers, the voice of snowy-haired Experience, the voice of sacred solemnity.

Classes resumed at ten-thirty. MacRae had no more until "logic" at two. He went to the library, and when he found that Fay was at the desk every day from ten-thirty to eleven-thirty, he determined to be there thereafter at that hour. He went into a coop between the high bookcases and took a seat facing the front of the room. By lowering his head a little he could see her between the top of a row of books and the bottom of the shelf above.

After half an hour of worthless study he approached the desk and asked if she could tell him where to find Hardy's *Dynasts.*

She looked up at him pleasantly.

"My, you're starting early. I'll bet you are going to star in that course."

He laughed as she rose.

"I like it a lot, but I'm afraid I won't star much."

He walked beside her to a far corner of the library, whispering so as not to disturb those studying at the tables.

"Do you like Dr. Down?" she asked *sotto voce,* letting her eyes run across the shelves.

"I think I shall. She certainly knows her stuff.

The way she read 'In the Servants' Quarters' this morning gave me a new appreciation of it. I had read it before at Princeton."

By this time the volume was in his hands. He thanked her and returned to his place.

The second half hour went as the first had gone. He realized he wasn't going to get much studying done during that period unless another librarian was appointed for the hour.

Lunch was always a poor excuse for a meal at the Dorm. Even at the opening of the school year it began to manifest its scrappy and hashy disposition. By June it would have had given up all attempts to interest the student appetite. If you were dying of hunger you ate. If not, you sat it out, and went downtown afterwards.

MacRae was dying of hunger; so he ate the spinach and eggs and hash. At least the bread was good. He ate six slices of it. The butter was not so good. But he was hungry.

After lunch he went to his room and took out his trumpet. This was to be his regular hour for practice. It put off the sleepy feeling for a while, anyhow. He began with a few scales of soft, clear notes that floated out across the campus like radiant bubbles blown one after the other from a clay pipe. He had a clever technique acquired through years of playing jazz. But recently he had been striving to purify his tone. He had been given a costly instrument for his last birthday. Its workmanship

was flawless, but it needed an artist's lip to make it sing its best music. He was working on this. Already he had begun to achieve his goal. He would work for ten minutes at a time on one particular note, making transitions, of course, but striking the dominant repeatedly, seeking to learn the secret of all the gradations of sound from brilliant lyric brass to molten moonlight silver.

This was the first time he had touched the cold mouthpiece with his lips since he had left his home over a month ago. He had not been able to practice in that suite at the Club. Now the hard touch of the metal, warming to his lips, the responsive action of the pearl keys, the graceful flare of the engraved bell, its golden mouth—all filled him with a reawakened love for his instrument. Since he had heard Fay touch the piano to subtle beauty of life he had determined in his heart to practice until the silver of his trumpet should be a voice fit to lead her artistic accompaniment.

The half hour passed swiftly. He suddenly remembered he had that "logic" class at two, three times a week. This was Friday; it would meet today. Before he put his trumpet away in its plush-lined case he played his favorite song, "Annie Laurie." It was a soft early autumn day with a warm faërie wind dancing in the trees, and his window was thrown open.

On her way to the Library, Fay Thurston heard

a Scotch air tremble from a silver throat somewhere.

A trumpet has a peculiar voice. You can liken other instruments to the natural music of hill and field, of bird and beast, of wind and waterfall; but there is no sound in nature quite like the voice of a trumpet. When rightly played, it has something of the sound of battle in it, and also something of the sweetness of wine poured from a silver flagon into a silver chalice. And, yet, it has always the sound of man. Wherever you hear its voice you feel there is a man's breath quickening it, a man's lips touching it. It is the voice of a man.

Fay heard it and wondered. She stopped a moment to listen, to discover the direction from which the clear melody floated. It was from the Gymnasium. Who could it be? She knew that Bruce did not play, neither did his roommate, Craig. It must be a new student. She passed on to the Library.

MacRae held the last low note as if it were a parting kiss. Then he wiped his lips with the back of his hand, the trumpet mouthpiece with his handkerchief; and, after putting his instrument carefully away, he picked up his logic book and walked over to the Main Building.

Nita had managed to make her way into the class. There was only one other girl in it, but twenty young men. They sat in a semicircle about Dr. Stone's desk in the corner of the room. With a

keen interest in his twinkling eyes he watched the students file in. When they were all seated and the bell had rung, he said quietly:

"Baker, will you start a hymn for us?"

Everyone smiled. Baker looked foolish, thought a minute, and then began to sing, "There Is Sunshine in My Soul Today," which the others soon took up. They sang just one stanza; then Dr. Stone rose from the creaky swivel chair.

"Let us pray," he said, clearing his throat.

"Our Father, we need Thy grace at the beginning of each new duty. Help us to acknowledge Thee in all our ways, and direct Thou our paths. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

With this curious introduction to the study of logic MacRae entered upon one of the most interesting courses he had ever enjoyed. The class was to become a forum of valuable discussion, a mine of new thoughts. The hour passed as a half hour. Dr. Stone might not write books of logic and make himself famous as a scholar, but if ever a man lived since Socrates who knew how to teach a subject so that young minds grasped his thoughts with bated interest, and fashioned their own, that man was Dr. Stone. He created his illustrations as he talked. He had no yellow manuscript lectures, no stereotyped jokes. He was mentally an example of perennial youth. He lived to teach, and he had grown yearly in his teaching ability. That first class opened MacRae's eyes to the wonders of true pedagogy. Not

while he was in the room—for there he was too entranced, too fascinated—but afterwards, as he walked over to the Gym to dress for the first football practice, he realized that he had at last glimpsed what teaching might be.

He put on his togs in the dressing room with the squad. There were the usual wise-cracks, the usual groans as the new shoes were pulled on, the usual dressing-room banter. MacRae entered into it whole-heartedly. He studied the various bodies, making a mental note of those that looked fast, shifty, and strong.

They trotted out Irving Avenue to Lawson Field, their cleats making a lot of clack-clacks on the macadam road. Some ran on the grass by the sidewalk, dodging the young trees planted all the way along. It was a quarter of a mile run out. The coach was already there. So was the tackling dummy, and so was the bucking machine—those playthings dear to the heart of every football candidate—dear as the most hated drudgery.

Griffiths called him over and conferred with him, while the boys gamboled about the field like young calves just out of the stall, chasing two or three spinning ovals. Some of them had been at football camp for two weeks before the opening of school and were in fairly good condition. The rest were already winded from the quarter-mile jog in the heavy football outfits.

Although Griffiths was much older than MacRae,

and had had a great deal of coaching experience, he immediately put MacRae at ease by asking his opinion of the best method for breaking them in. MacRae gave him some of the Princeton dope. Griffiths took charge of the whole squad, telling them that he intended later to turn the backfield men over to MacRae. He had them run for ten yards and throw themselves on the ground. Up fast, another ten yards, down again. It was terribly jarring. It shook every bone. They didn't want to get up, but the voice rasped:

"C'mon there—up—up! All ready—go! Down, now! Down! Dive, Jones. You're not jumping into bed. Leave your feet. All right—again. Go!"

They went up and down the field a couple of times in this manner, like a bunch of Hindus inflicting their bodies with torture to purify themselves.

Then came calisthenic exercises and dummy tackling and machine bucking and concentrated instruction on how to clip out a man—everything but football; all sorts of work, but no play. Then to add the final straw, they made three laps around the track, and the quarter-mile home stretch on macadam, with feet that ached and burned, legs that moved heavily, shoulders and backs that pained, and faces streaked with sweat.

MacRae went through most of it himself. He intended to show these backs something, not tell

them alone. To do that he would have to be in condition. That meant no more cigarettes.

On the field he was impressed with two things especially. One was the cheery presence of Professor Snell, the little Latin teacher of the morning class, out there watching the opening drill, and encouraging the boys with his voice. That was a revelation to MacRae.

The other thing that surprised him a little was the appearance of Captain Bruce in his uniform, yellow hair tousled, legs bare. When he hit the dummy it was as if a bull had charged a wooden wall. MacRae noted the drive in the calves of his legs and wondered of he had ever seen a football build on a big university team to beat it. But what surprised him most was not the powerful drive in those legs, but the speed that such a heavy man, a man of one hundred and eighty-seven pounds stripped, could maintain for one hundred yards. MacRae had been noted as one of the fastest sprinters in the interclass relays; but in the dash the length of the field, Bruce Wendell crossed the goal line at his heels, both of them five yards ahead of the field of straining runners.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The following week the school was running smoothly. Only the Freshmen, with their little green caps, found difficulty in remembering what class met, where, and when.

The bookstore settled back to normal trade after panicky days of rush. Between bells for classes each day, especially before chapel, its efficiency would still be taxed, selling candy to those who had arisen too late for breakfast, or who had eaten at the Dorm.

The Library became a scene of real study, with surreptitious cooings now and then from alcoves that were made for love. But at this season of the year they had not yet come into their own. It took spring, April Spring, with open windows, and campus buds, and twitter of birds, to turn these book-lined booths into love-bird cages. Not yet did they manifest their true nature. But already MacRae had taken one of them to be the reserved box-seat from which he watched his favorite actress. Each day at ten-thirty she could be seen in the same rôle, but nearly always in a slightly different costume. Sometimes only a charming shift of combination worked the miracle of freshness. He watched her friendly courtesy to all who approached the desk, whether

they were young men or young women. She did not seem to look upon the work as a duty, but as a privilege. She must enjoy this opportunity to help many of her fellow-students, else why should she do this for twenty-five cents an hour?

Of course, he always had a book open on the table before him, and frequently a pencil in his hand. He must have something on which to drop his gaze if she looked his way. Delightedly he would watch her stamp a book with the same grace she used to strike a quivering chord on the piano. Jealously he would watch her each time she lifted her head to a masculine enquirer. Her throat and chin made such exquisite lines when she did that! And she had learned to rise so noiselessly, and to walk so daintily tip-toe. He longed to dance with her, to dance a soft waltz, or a dreamy "blues." She wasn't the type for barnyard music, the hotsy-totsy stuff. Of course, she wouldn't dance at all; he was sure of that. But what a dancer she would make!

Nearly always just when he would be thinking of that, some girl with formless build, and shell-rimmed glasses, and an armful of books would stroll into the coop and say sweetly, with the free hand on the back of the chair opposite him,

"Is this seat taken?"

Once he had said "Yes" to the odious question when it wasn't, and then had had to button-hole Craig in the annex and get him to come to the seat to save his face.

Fay always treated him with perfect freedom. There was neither forwardness nor reticence in her manner. He tried to adopt the same attitude, but found it terribly difficult. His unconcern was overdone. He sensed it himself, even if it were not apparent to others. Fay was the kind of girl that made friends easily and kept them long. He noted with a sort of pride that she was a girl's girl. There were some cats, of course, that would have liked to pick a scrap with her. Her very friendliness seemed to them to have some unworthy motive. But most of the girls loved her. Her Literary Society had elected her to the presidency for the first term of this her last year.

But if Fay gave him no special attention, her roommate made up for that. He found that he could never cross the lobby after dinner at night without stopping to chat with her. Her eyes always said, "Hello, you."

And he would always stroll over, hands in pockets, with all the unconcern he so longed to display before another girl, and which he could not find when he wanted it. He could not analyze the power this girl's eyes had over him. For some time he did not even realize that they had a power over him. He thought he just went because he found it deucedly interesting to talk with her. Perhaps he did. But at any rate, he always went.

They seldom ever spoke of anything serious. It was light badinage. It was simply the amusing

play of wits, but it was fascinating play when a girl's black hair, and blue eyes, and thin red lips all whispered invitation.

It would usually begin with his spoken, "Hello, Nita Mae," in answer to her unspoken salutation.

She would say, "You here again?" with a bored accent, while her eyes danced delight.

"Where?" he would ask.

"Oh, isn't this heaven?"

"Perhaps so, but I thought you were Nita Carlsen. I must have been mistaken."

"No, you were quite right. Mine was simply a rhetorical question. This is, in fact, the dullest class of the day, taught by Professor Mac. I didn't know what I was letting myself in for when I signed up for your course, Professor."

"No?"

"No."

"Well, do you know now?"

"I have a horrible idea."

"You probably have many of those. You've given up smoking, eh? That's the reason. D. T's! Too bad."

"Shhh," in a whisper. "Mrs. Carwell's right over there looking at you, silly. Want to get me kicked out?"

"I wouldn't kick——"

"What?"

"—you out."

"Oh!" With an artificial sigh of relief.

"I'd just lock you out."

"And which side of the door would you be on, big boy?"

"The other one."

"Doing what?"

"Laughing at you through the keyhole as well as up my sleeve. But say, this isn't writing my ten syllogisms for tomorrow. Have yours done yet?" He would start to go.

"Are you really going?"

"Yes. Good-by. I'm off."

"Good-by."

"Hm! how can you take the separation so easy?" He would come back at that. He would always come back. He seldom left until it was time for the masculine diners to be out of the building. He was frequently the last one out.

That is how it came to be whispered about the Dorm, and thence about the school, that "Trixy" MacRae had fallen for Nita Carlsen. Everybody "knew" it except the two who were concerned. It never entered MacRae's head. It was never out of Nita's, but she still knew it wasn't so, though she fervently wished it were.

She would sit those nights when the moon was on the wane, at her bedroom window in a quilted bathrobe of pink silk. A little red glow would appear at her lips in alternation with a little stream of smoke that was blown out of the window. This was always after Fay was in bed in her own room

across the suite. They had a study room in common and separate bedrooms.

But one night, it was the Friday night before the first game, Fay caught her by mistake. The squad had left for Rock Island that morning. They had gone off in a volley of cheers. She had seen MacRae swing aboard the train with the others. And now it was eleven o'clock. Lights were out over the whole Dorm, the rounds had been made. She had jumped out of bed for her evening smoke. She had forgotten to close her door to the study room and so, when her lighter fell clattering on the floor after she had lit the cigarette and hit her hand on the edge of the dresser in the darkness, Fay poked her head out of her own door.

"What was that noise, Nita? Did you hear it?"

It was too late to hide the red glow at her lips. Fay saw it, smelled the drifted odor of smoke, and knew.

Nita sat still, smoking. There was no use in throwing it out of the window now. Fay had seen. She could only wait for the explosion. It might mean expulsion.

Fay walked over, her pajamas faintly visible in the dim light.

"Why, honey, I thought you had quit," she said quietly. No didactic prudishness, no sound of astonishment, no bit of mockery in the tone, simply disappointment. It was a hurt tone. It surprised Nita.

"I tried, kid; but, gee, my skin just crawls sometimes. I've just got to have one once in a while. I can't help it, Fay."

"I'm sorry. It's tough. You'll get caught sooner or later and then you'll have to go. I'd hate to see you go, Nita." She wanted to put her arm about the girl, but she was too wise for that. Nita would resent it just then.

"Listen, Nita," she said, sitting down on the bed with a little shiver, for the night air was cold, "if you get kicked out, you'll never get Randall."

"Who says I want to get him?"

"I can tell you do, honey. I don't blame you; he's nice."

"Well, he smokes."

"Not any more, not since football started."

"How do you know?"

"He told me."

"And you believed him?"

"Wouldn't you?"

There was silence after this.

"Well, what has this got to do with me, anyhow?"

"You better stay here, Nita."

"I haven't a chance with him."

"Why not? He's fallen for you already."

"Don't kid me, big girl. He has no idea of falling for me."

Fay wanted to say many things. She wanted to tell this girl of One who is able to break all chains,

great or small—the chain of a little white cigarette, the chain of a silver flask the chain of a deadly white powder, the chain of lust, of anger, of pride —Who all down the ages had been striking prisoners free. She wanted to tell her, but instead she said quietly,

"Good-night, Nita." And, walking barefoot across to her own room, she closed the door and knelt for a moment at her bedside and spoke to her Lord about Nita.

Down in a Rock Island hotel MacRae crawled into bed wearily. It had been a tough week. Tomorrow would give them an idea of how much of an advance the squad had made. The Swedes had a clever and heavy bunch this year, and it was the first time Wharton had ever taken them on their schedule. He lay thinking over the possibilities, working out in his mind the best combination for his backfield.

The girls up in "211" never entered his thoughts. There are times when even a man in love forgets women; that is, if he is a man as well as a poet. He may write, "Beloved, you are never out of my thoughts," but that is pardonable hyperbole—more or less. There are times when even college men think of something else.

MacRae had known a good many of those times during the past week. He had found a keen new joy in coaching. Instead of being bawled at, and prodded, and razzed, and talked to, *he* was now

doing the talking, the demonstrating. It gave him a new sense of authority, of importance, of dignity.

But more than that, he found after his first week that he was fitted for this work. He did not raise his voice as if he were beating the stroke for a bunch of galley-slaves. He would take his backfield men aside separately and talk with them: show them how to hold the ball so it couldn't fly out when they were hit by three men at once; how to start away on a run with the foot toward the side of attack; how to pivot through an off-tackle slice; how to shake a tackler with your hips; how to pass on the run; how to pocket a punt; how to get off a high far kick; how to lift a graceful drop over the bars at thirty yards. He had just begun, of course. But it was thrilling to see the way they took hold; the way they tried to use the little knacks he showed them. It was also pitiful at times. He would sit beside some of them on the bench during scrimmage and point out the mistakes of the player to his substitute. He would hold out his best men in this way and let them see their own faults acted out by someone else.

Already the fellows were beginning to love him. In the dressing room after a hard workout, with the hiss of the showers going below, he would tell them stories of some of the big games he had seen and played in. But they always had to start him at this with a question, for he never began of his own accord.

He fell asleep with the memory of his last Yale game warming him pleasantly. He awoke to the sound of pouring rain. It kept up all day.

The game was a hopeless travesty of football. He sat with the cold drip running down his collar, shivering at times, and shouting madly at others. Something of the spirit of Wharton had entered him, unknown to himself. He had been greatly surprised when the squad bowed their heads in a brief prayer for strength to play clean and hard before they trotted out into the rain. They did not ask for victory. They asked for courage to play the game. He didn't know there were men like that in school today. It was all very strange.

But they certainly fought bravely. In the first quarter they kept the Swedes down in their own section of the slimy field most of the time. Twice they came within a few yards of scoring. In the second quarter the Augie fullback dropped one over from the thirty-five yard line. The second half Wharton was on the defensive most of the time. They tried two dropkicks, which failed, but they kept their opponents from scoring again. The game ended 3–0 with Wharton on the zero end.

The sodden players walked grimly back to the dressing room, their orange jerseys turned to brown by the soaking rain, and spattered with mud; their faces grimy and grotesque; their hands sticky; and their hearts heavy.

If ever men appreciate a hot shower it is after

a game like that. MacRae stood down in the shower room and talked with them as they splashed under the steamy spray. And when they came out, the discouraged looks were gone. They had done their best. They would win next time, he told them.

CHAPTER EIGHT

So BEGAN a season that was to be memorable in Wharton football history. It was to have a climax. But the climax was not yet.

MacRae worked hard every afternoon, worked along with his men, and watched results carefully. His optimism in regard to the next game, however, received a setback.

The contest was with Mid-States "Y" College, an aggregation of young men training specifically as instructors in physical education. It had usually been rather a walkaway for the "Y" lads. This year it was a hard fight, and this second battle was also won by a dropkick, the score at the end of the game reading, "Mid-States 'Y' College, 10; Wharton, 7."

Captain Bruce was responsible for six of those Wharton points, and in this way:

For seven years of football this lineman had been practicing by himself the dubious art of picking up a dribbling football on the run. For the first time in his experience an opportunity to use it came in the third quarter when the "Y" halfback was tackled by Strough before he was able to get his pass off, and Wendell was there to scoop up the crazily bouncing oval.

The goal posts were fifty-eight yards away. Two "Y" men had pursued Bruce for a time, but gave up as they saw the distance widen between them and the fast tackle.

The game over, the Wharton students wended their way homeward, still raving about Wendell's spectacular play.

Behind, in the Mid-States "Y" gym, Wendell stood stolidly under the showers and turned on the cold water. He felt elated himself, although he did not show it. It had been his first chance to score. The breaks were with him this year. But in spite of it all they had lost. That was what hurt.

When he came up, still rubbing himself vigorously with the huge towel, he met MacRae. The latter took his hand cordially.

"That was a great run, Wendell," he said.

"Thanks," he heard mumbled in return. "It was only a lucky break."

That evening Bruce sat for a while in the Dorm with Fay, and then asked her to walk downtown afterwards with him for ice cream. She tried to beg off, but he would not take her excuses; and when she thought of his heroic game of the afternoon, she decided to go to please him.

The first touch of frost was in the evening air. Wendell helped her on with her coat as they rose to go. His hand lingered tenderly a moment on her shoulder. Outside she took his arm formally. He thrilled as he always did to her merest touch.

There was no moon, but the clear sky glittered with stars like a gown of blue velvet, diamond-studded.

On the way home he proposed to her for the third time. She had had a feeling this was coming again. That was why she had tried to get excused. But it was inescapable.

"Is it not beautiful?" he asked, as they walked along. In spite of his apparent stolidity he had a deep æsthetic appreciation.

She saw his tilted head, followed his gaze to the stars, and said "Yes" quietly. She felt a little sad that she could not love this chap who was so passionately devoted to her. It was an ever present problem.

While they looked one of the gems seemed to break its fastening thread and drip a streak of jewel fire to the unseen floor somewhere. It was not yet the time of the heavy meteor showers, when numberless stars would flash from darkness to darkness. It was nearing the time of falling leaves and falling stars, already one or two would cross the autumn sky while somewhere a romantic girl would be breathing her heart's desire ere it sank from sight.

When Fay asked him laughingly if he had made his wish according to the old superstition, he was philosophically wondering where the bright meteor would strike. Perhaps some desolate bit of country, some apple orchard, some quiet stream, some high mountain, some far sea, some hot desert, would be its final resting place, its grave. Why

did they not strike a house, or city, more often, he wondered. Her question interrupted his thoughts.

He did not join in her laughter, but answered gravely, "Fay, you know the wish that is always on my heart."

Immediately she regretted her question. Well, she was out to settle this thing. It must be done tonight. She had made up her mind; so she asked a question that was quite unnecessary. She knew it was, but she asked it.

"What is your wish, Bruce?"

"Oh, you've heard it often. You know I want you for always. Fay, why won't you listen to me?"

"I am. I have. But I can give you a much better wish. Why don't you wish for a girl who would suit you? You know I don't."

"I know you do."

"But we're so different."

"That doesn't matter, for I love you, Fay. You don't know how I love you. Can't you care for me a little?"

"I do, Bruce. I like you a lot. . . . I admire you just heaps—but—well—I can't explain it. Love is a curious force. We can't understand it. We can't control it—entirely—I mean. I sometimes wish I could love you the way you want me to; but I can't—I just can't. Why, I don't know. I think you're wonderful. You've been a prince to me—and—and—Bruce, that's why it hurts me to

talk this way—and—and go out with you. I'm sorry."

During this speech they had walked more than a block. Wendell had been quite silent, Fay pausing several times in the hope that he would speak, but he had said nothing. He always took it this way—with a silent stoicism that made her heart ache.

"Oh Bruce, please don't act that way, please! Can't we be good friends—just?"

"I've tried, haven't I? You know it's impossible. I'll always love you this way." He spoke quietly with sadness. "Fay, do you love someone else?" he asked suddenly. The question startled her. It stated baldly something she had been subconsciously asking herself just that afternoon as she had watched Coach MacRae walk off the field with his arm around the shoulder of the little halfback he was developing into a flashy player.

Now that the question lay there between them like a thrown gauntlet she did not know what to do with it. It challenged her. She faltered and said briefly,

"I—I don't know."

"You don't know?" he echoed in surprise. "You don't know if you're in love or not? What do you mean?"

"Well, I have a crush, but I've had those before. This may be merely that."

"I see."

They turned the corner past the "Y" House. From an open window came the sound of a banjo and a ukulele and several male voices joining in happy barbershop harmony. Carefree joy of youth, it was. "So some of them are enjoying life," thought Wendell hopelessly.

He felt completely discouraged. The drop from the pinnacle of his success of the afternoon to this utter defeat worked on his naturally despondent nature. He had been so hopeful that the cheers of the school might warm her heart, might plead his case. Evidently this girl was not to be won by cheers. If she would not have him now at the height of his fame as football captain, she would never have him, he felt. He came out of his reverie to hear her telling him so.

"Bruce," she said, "we can't go on this way. I've been giving you steady dates for three years. I've told you how I feel. Now don't you think we better break company? I don't want to go on hurting you this way."

"You'll hurt me more if I can't go out with you. But I think I see your point. You want me to give someone else a show: is that it?"

"Bruce!"

"Sure, that's it. I know what it's like around here. If a fellow takes a girl out three times straight, he's engaged to her, and everybody else stands off as if she were his wife. Isn't that it?"

"It's not quite that bad; but folks do think we

are practically engaged. You see you've taken me to everything for three years."

"Yes, I know. I have been pretty selfish with you; but you don't realize what every little date with you means to me. I just live to see you."

"You haven't very high ambitions."

"It's hardly a time to joke, Fay. Is this to be really good-by, or will you still go out with me?"

"Well, I think it would be much better for us both if you would take someone else out once in a while."

"That's not my question. Do I get any more dates, or not?" The lines deepened in his face. It took on a fresh anxiety. She could not help noticing it.

"If you maintain that it will be harder for you to go on without seeing me at all—why—I suppose —I will continue to go with you. But it must always be on the basis of friendship only. We can never be more than that. Now that's final, Bruce. Please don't bring up this subject again."

"Well, may I take you to the Washington Banquet, then?"

"Isn't it rather early for that?"

"No. I'm afraid you'll go with someone else."

"Don't be funny. Who would ask me? I've gone with you for three years. We're taken for granted."

"Maybe, but I want you to promise. Will you?"

"All right, Bruce. I do think it's awfully

foolish, though, for us to go so steadily when it can never mean as much to us both as it does to you."

"Are you sure it is 'never'?"

"Yes; I'm sure. I've always admired you, Bruce. But the thing I call love isn't there. It's funny. You see, I feel that there must be two essential elements in a successful match: compatibility of temperament, and some indefinable attraction of personality. We might have the first. We get along well together, although you are a little too gloomy for me. I've never been out with a boy I like better; and yet, in my case at least, the second factor is not there. Some girls might overlook the second, because of your attractiveness; but I just can't. I guess I'm incurably romantic. I still believe that marriage can be the most blissfully happy state, as it ought to be the most naturally normal. But to make that state perfect there must be a mutual love that includes the whole personality—physical, mental, and spiritual—and I just don't feel that for you. I suppose I sound as if I had been reading silly sex books on 'How To Be Happy, though Married' and all that rot, but it's not that. I've come to some definite conclusions from my own experience and from observation of others." She stopped as if ashamed of her own frankness.

"Go on," he said. "I'm interested in your views. I want to see where I disqualify."

"That's what I can't say. Some fellows I could tell easily the reason why they do not appeal to me. I can't tell you."

"Then there is no chance of my improving if you can't tell me where I'm off."

"I guess not."

"Well, I just want to tell you, Fay, how much these three years have meant to me. You've been wonderful to me. You've never led me on with false hopes; I'll say that for you. And you have helped me spiritually. When I came here I had little faith in the Bible; you know that. But when I saw the change in you, it set me thinking. I'll always be a Christian because of your life. I'm not a very strong one. I'd rather clip out three men in a football game than stand up in prayer meeting and testify, or pray aloud. I guess I'm yellow somewhere; but I just can't do it, Fay. I love the Lord. He has delivered me from the burden of sin I had. I trust Him for the future, but I tremble when it comes to public confession. It's a peculiar sort of fear. I can't shake it."

"Have you asked Him to give you strength?"

"I have, and then when the time comes I sit glued to my seat."

"Of course, we differ in nature. I'm convinced that the life is more than the spoken word. Your life counts here, Bruce. I'm sure of that."

"It's good of you to say so, but I still lose my

temper terribly at times. It's awful. I just go blind for a moment; then it's over. But I say things I will always regret."

"Victory isn't always sudden and complete. Sometimes there are many battles before the enemy is conquered."

"So it seems."

"The main thing is to keep up the fight, and take His strength to be your shield and buckler."

"I will, Fay. I want you to always remember, even after you are married to someone else, that you left a permanent impression on my life. I can never be quite the same as I was before I came to know you and love you as I do. You will always be an inspiration to me."

They turned into the campus driveway, lined with maples, not yet golden-clothed, but yellowing. On the steps of the Dorm porch they found MacRae and Nita standing. It had not been a date. He had simply talked with her after supper as usual, and the talk had extended to a walk at her suggestion. They were just saying good-night as Wendell and Fay came up.

Nita said "hello" to the couple and started to go in; but Fay detained her with a "Wait a minute" and, taking leave of Wendell hurriedly, the two passed inside together. MacRae was embarrassed for the moment, although he was able to say "Good evening," with his customary grace.

Wendell and he started across the stretch of grass

to the Gym. There was no real path, but one was rapidly being made. Their talk drifted at once to the game of the afternoon, as if the girls they had just left had never existed.

In contrast to this natural masculine reticence, the girls walked up to their room commenting on more recent events, events of far greater importance to them.

Nita did most of the talking, not realizing that she was being prompted now and then by a question from her roommate. She was glad to talk about MacRae. She did not notice how content Fay seemed to listen.

And Fay went to sleep that night asking herself a question, and answering it in the negative: No; she must not let herself fall for this MacRae. He was not her type. Besides this, he would never look twice at her, anyhow, and tonight she had seen the tragedy of love that is not returned. No; she must not fall for him.

CHAPTER NINE

It was during the excitement that preceded the season's biggest game that MacRae was hooked for his first student prayer meeting. These meetings were held every Tuesday night at seven o'clock, in the new Lower Chapel, but he had never ventured to visit the gatherings, which he pictured to himself as fanatical orgies. Some things he could not stand, and a prayer meeting, so he had concluded, was one of those things.

And so, it was with ill-concealed displeasure that he listened to Craig's request that Tuesday noon. He had just completed the preliminary warming scales on his trumpet when he heard the voice of Craig at his door. He liked Craig's voice. He liked Craig.

"Oh, MacRae," he was saying, "you're just the man I want to see." His dark brown eyes always shone with a deep sincerity and an utter frankness. "I have to lead prayer meeting tonight, and at the last minute Adele Barber informs me that she has taken a cold and can't sing the number of music I had arranged for. Now, although I like Adele's voice a lot, yet I'm just a little glad that I am able to ask you to take her place. I think variety is essential to the maintenance of interest in anything,

even a prayer meeting, and we get quite a few vocal solos during the year. I've been listening to you play. You can make that trumpet sing. I love the tones you get, and I'm sure the folks would enjoy hearing you tonight. Will you take the number for me?"

MacRae started to protest that he had never played a hymn on that trumpet, but hesitated and said first,

"Why, it's rather too late. I won't have time to practice."

"Oh, yes you will, after football today. I'll arrange it for you. I've asked Fay Thurston to take the piano. We try to get her as often as we can."

That fact dissipated MacRae's wavering doubt. He had been waiting for this chance. He had to take it.

"All right, Craig," he said, "I'll do it for you."

"What time do you get off the field?"

"About five o'clock."

"Then you can meet Fay in one of the music rooms about five-thirty? That will give you half an hour before supper. O. K.?"

"I'm not stuck on the idea, but I'll do my best. By the way, Barney, when do I appear on the bill?" He asked the question with a mocking smirk that seemed to hurt Craig.

"Well," he said seriously, "I'm supposed to say a few words after the Scripture reading, and then

I'll call on you just before the period for testimony and prayer."

MacRae was sorry. His levity had evidently disturbed the young fellow. As Craig was editor of the school paper, and roommate of Captain Wendell, naturally MacRae had come into contact with him on frequent occasions. He considered the editor one of the calmest characters he had ever run across. He took the razzing incidental to his editorial position with a good-natured grace, that made the razzer feel ashamed. He conducted a tiring staff meeting with a wise complacence in which there was still a forceful leadership. He was everywhere and always the kind of character MacRae had heard preached from pulpits, but which he had never expected to see in real life.

MacRae tried to smooth over his break, as he now considered it.

"Excuse me, Barney. I didn't mean to be funny, but why do you take a meeting like this so seriously?"

He had intended to go and enjoy the religious vaudeville, to laugh secretly, and wonder how people could ever work themselves into such a state of fervor.

"I don't look upon a prayer meeting as entertainment, MacRae; and if you play for us tonight in that spirit, I'll be disappointed, that's all."

"What is a prayer meeting for, according to you?"

"Well, personally, I regard it simply as a time of fellowship in worship in its three great branches: prayer, praise, and testimony."

MacRae blew loosely through the valves of his trumpet and shook the moisture from the drip with a short jerk. Then he asked,

"Did you have anything in particular you wanted me to play?"

"No; make your own selection. Well, thanks, MacRae," and he went back to his room.

MacRae sat down on the bed. He began to repent of his ready agreement. He was in for it now. He was to play at a prayer meeting; he was to play with Fay Thurston at the piano.

Logic class was a success that day as usual. Professor Stone was able to dislodge the problem that was in his mind when he entered the room and to direct his thoughts to the subject in hand. It took a great teacher to do that, one who realized that you cannot put your thoughts brick-fashion into another's mind. You can stimulate another to think, however, to make his own bricks. You can give him the straw and the clay. He looked upon that as his most important duty, and he was successful. MacRae was fascinated with his inductive reasoning.

When the bell rang at three, he again woke up to the fact that he had to play at a prayer meeting that night. He had often played at dances, just for the exotic joy of helping to make music that would fill young bodies with barbaric rhythm, with

barbaric fierceness and abandon. He could see them now passing his muted bell as he slid into a particularly "hot" solo passage, the snares sibilant, the saxophones crooning, the banjos tantalizing twanging—young, supple bodies, gold, and crimson, and green, and blue against tall black and white. Tonight he was to play at a prayer meeting! It was a good joke.

That afternoon he wondered at the lack of enthusiasm in Captain Wendell's game. During the scrimmage, when three new plays were tried out for the approaching contest with Wharton's old rival, he blocked with precision, opened the holes successfully, and tackled hard, but the brilliance of his usual play was lacking. He seemed mechanical. The inspiring leadership was gone. He played as one of the team, not as the captain who generally led with dashing and reckless courage.

MacRae was fairly worried before the afternoon dimmed with long shadows across the field. This was no time to let down in spirit. This was the time to work up to a fighting edge. The backfield men were improving rapidly. He now had a combination which pleased him, which had attained a measure of polished smoothness. They got their punts off with quick force, passed with a new accuracy, hit the line hard, and picked their holes intelligently. But he had played halfback long enough to realize that a backfield is helpless without a strong line. He jogged back to the Gym with

the problem still on his mind. It was not new. He had noticed Wendell's listlessness the day before also. He would have to talk to him, he decided.

Practice had lasted a little longer than usual. He took a quick shower, and made up for its brevity with a more vigorous toweling. He trotted into his room, glowing, his bathrobe draped hastily and ineffectually about his shoulders. Usually he could dress in five minutes if he were in a hurry. It took him longer this time. It was five-thirty before he snatched up his trumpet case and ran over to the Main Building and up to the third floor, where were several music rooms.

As he reached the hallway he was stopped suddenly by sounds such as had arrested him one night in Brooklyn—sounds that had already changed considerably the course of his life. They rose insistently above the mixture of noises coming to him from the other practice rooms—the scraping of horsehair on catgut, a vocal scale sung to a broad "a," another piano jangling. But he would have recognized that playing anywhere. He listened for a moment to ascertain the direction of its issue; then went to the door of one of the rooms facing the west. He stood looking through the glass of the door.

At the grand piano sat the woman he loved—much as he had seen her first; but now, instead of a bare electric bulb to silhouette her soft profile there was a window that opened on an evening sky.

The sun had just gone down and the west was a bay of molten lava in which floated black cloud-islands, fire-rimmed. She was not looking at the keyboard. Her head was turned gracefully toward the window which framed it; but her hands were playing. She seemed to be translating the visual glory of the hour into golden harmony of sound.

He listened and watched with a renewal of his early fascination. He thought he recognized the theme. He could not locate it, however. It moved slowly, with the stately solemnity of a vesper chant. It rose in a gradual crescendo of praise, as if a choir were ceremonially walking to its place in the chancel from distant choir rooms; and then it broke into a pæan at the close, as if the choir had suddenly turned, facing the nave, and thus heightening the effect of the full-throated climax.

She stopped abruptly and began to look up a number in the index at the back of a hymn book. He entered. She glanced up, smiling.

"Hello, Fay," he said. "Sorry I'm late."

"It's all right. I just arrived."

"I heard your magnificent vesper hymn, your ode to the sunset. May I ask what it is?"

She laughed lightly. "That's both a very fine compliment and a very severe criticism. Didn't you recognize the theme? I always dread obscuring it by too ornate decoration instead of making it clearer by exposition."

"I'm sure you did not do that. It is simply that my knowledge of sacred music is at fault."

"Nice of you to say that. It was Sherwin's exquisite melody for 'Day Is Dying in the West.' You have sung it often, I am sure."

"Not often, and probably never with any appreciation. I shall from now on."

"Did you come to practice, Mr. MacRae?" she asked mischievously. "We haven't much time."

"Miss Efficiency, you would bring that up."

"Oh, all right, if you are more interested in compliments, let me tell you how much I enjoy your playing."

"Let's practice," he said, and they laughed together. "But first, where did you ever hear me play?" he added.

"Aren't you the one who practices in the Gym after lunch?"

He was delighted. To hide the fact he took out his watch. "Say, you were right. We haven't much time."

"Well, what are we going to play?"

"I wish we might try the one you just finished. I do think it was keen. Is it in that book?"

"Yes." She opened to it without referring to the index, and handed it to him.

"Do you think it would make a trumpet solo? Would it go at prayer meeting all right?"

"Just wonderfully, I think."

"Let's try it."

While he took out his horn and tuned it with the piano, the molten sky-sea was cooling gradually through orange flame to red.

"You play it through the way it ought to go again," he advised. "I'll listen first."

"Watch the words as I play," she suggested, her hands weaving a soft introduction. "I've found that they often give one a key to the interpretation of the music."

Again, instinctively, she turned her eyes to the window. The harmony throbbed with living gold. He read the words:

"Day is dying in the west;
Heaven is touching earth with rest;
Wait and worship while the night
Sets her evening lamps alight
Through all the sky."

There was the hush of sunset nature in the words. As the refrain began, he seemed to hear again the choir voices he had imagined when he first arrived. Her phrasing was particularly wonderful.

"Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of Hosts!
Heaven and earth are full of Thee;
Heaven and earth are praising Thee,
O Lord Most High!"

She spoke to him with the piano still vibrating to the last chord, her eyes still gazing out of the win-

dow. "Doesn't it make you feel like that when you see such a glorious sunset?"

In a short instant of silence MacRae did a lot of thinking. No, to be quite frank with himself, a sunset never made him feel that way. He admired and appreciated the beauty of the world. It was the only thing that compensated for the ugliness that man had made in many places. It was a long time since he had thought to attribute it all to a Creator Lord. He just hadn't bothered to think about the matter. Of what importance was it anyhow? One could never know. We had evolved from the slime through millions of eons.

That philosophy had seemed to him to be back of his science courses, his literature courses, and his history courses. He had accepted it as an explanation because, at least, it pushed the problem of origins back far enough so that it became lost in the dimness of the past. God was a Force, not a Person. You can't worship an impersonal Force; you can't worship Electricity. You can only worship a Personality. And, since there was no Personality big enough, you didn't worship; you did not pray. You went to chapel because you had to; you stood when you sang; you whispered during the prayer; you dreamed to the preacher's droning voice; you coughed if he continued past twelve o'clock; you were glad to get out into the fresh air again, where you could light a cigarette, curse like a man, stretch, laugh, and forget.

But here was a girl who worshiped at the sight of

a painted sky; whose being seemed to pulse with adoration and praise so that it came from her fingertips in rich harmony. It was as natural to her as it was to the birds at sundown. He marveled. It was so new to him. But her question, what was he to do with it?

"Doesn't it?" she repeated.

"It is glorious," he said. "It is no wonder you played as you did."

She did not take notice of the evasion.

"I'm funny that way, but I'm deeply moved by the emotion of a mood. An atmosphere like this affects me strangely."

"That is because you are an artist."

"But don't you feel it?"

"I am beginning to."

"Well, are you ready?" she said, holding her little wrist watch up to him suggestively. He knew it was there, a tiny silver thing, but he only saw the graceful wrist it encircled.

He stood behind her and raised his trumpet. As he played, he thought of a painting he had seen once of a man upon a city wall in old Judæa blowing the ram's horn at the sunset hour to announce the beginning of the Sabbath. So he felt. It was a call to worship. He had never tried anything like it before. His lips trembled a little as he shaped the tones. Even in the little room they rose with matchless purity. They should have been heard from a

parapet of an old Norman tower. They should have rung across the campus.

He suddenly realized that he was achieving, almost without effort, what he had been struggling to gain for two years. His emotions had never before been kindled. He now knew at once that you must feel before you can play. Even in the closing crescendo he never let the silver shake from his tones; he never let the brass blare through. It was a silver shout of praise. The last note seemed to drift off into silence and yet sing on in some distant echo.

Fay gasped her admiration.

"Oh, I never dreamed you could play like that! You are the artist!"

He felt weak. "I never dreamed I could myself. I think you must be the inspiration." Then he discovered that he had not heard the accompaniment. So concentrated had been his attention upon his own production, that he had not noticed hers. It had been perfect. It had followed and blended with his music. It had not once obtruded. She was wonderful. He told her so.

"Really, Fay, it was your playing that helped me to feel the beauty of this hour."

"I am glad," she said, "if that is true. I am glad that you have found your voice. I hope you will never lose it."

He walked over to the Dorm with her in a confused mental state. He was ecstatically happy, but

he was also deeply troubled. He had imbibed her spirit for the moment; he feared that already the high inspiration of that hour was gone. He felt that he would be unable to re-create it.

He sat near the front of the long Lower Chapel that night. The meeting opened at seven sharp, with a song service. He had never heard anything quite like their singing. The hall was practically filled with about three hundred young people. They stood to the first hymn:

> "I am redeemed, but not with silver;
> I am bought, but not with gold;
> Bought with a price—the blood of Jesus,
> Precious price of love untold."

It seemed to him that he had never heard singing so spontaneously joyful. Everyone sang heartily, freely. It was not the voice of a trained choir. It was the voice of redeemed humanity—out of all classes, races, and kindreds; from many States in the Union and many foreign lands; from rich homes, and poor homes, and comfortable homes; young voices, jubilant voices, that had found the Saviour in the beautiful hour of youth. MacRae had never experienced anything like it. You couldn't laugh at this: it was too impressive. The song leader would ask for a favorite and three or four numbers would come scattering from the crowd at once. Nearly all of them had their favorite hymns, hymns that they often found themselves singing when they awoke in

the morning, and whistled on the way to class, and hummed as they dressed for supper.

That from the first had struck MacRae as terribly peculiar. Hymns were the popular songs on this campus. Oh, you could hear the others too. You would frequently catch a jazz break winging its blue flight from a fourth-floor window. The football men would chant, "Show me the way to go home; I'm tired and I wanna go to bed," as they pulled off each other's sweaty jerseys after practice. A Dorm room would enclose a dreamy waltz sung by sweet voices to strumming ukes. Few felt it a sin to sing the modern love lyrics just because they were accompanied by the modern syncopation, but the astonishing thing to MacRae was this fondness they had for singing hymns during the week as well as on Sunday.

He was really sorry when the song service was over, and began to get nervous as Craig read the Scripture lesson. He read well, not hurriedly. The portion was found in the first chapter of the epistle of James. One or two of the verses struck him forcibly. Craig read them so that they should stand out. ". . . he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Craig spoke briefly, but effectively. He manifested no nervousness, none of the amateur stammer-

ing in front of a large audience. MacRae listened with interest:

"A circumstance which took place today caused me to change my message for this evening. Miss Barber was unable to sing tonight and Mr. MacRae kindly agreed to substitute for her. Some of you have enjoyed hearing Mr. MacRae practice. That is saying a good deal for him. We don't enjoy hearing most people practice—at least, I don't. In a few minutes I am going to ask him to play for us, but first I want to direct your attention to a verse in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. It is one of those axiomatic texts which may be taken out of their context without harm to their meaning, or danger of false interpretation. It may have many applications. It is the eighth verse of the fourteenth chapter. 'For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?'

"The figure of speech is clear. The trumpet has always been associated with battle. The voice of no other instrument will carry so far across tented hills and armed plains. Even above the clash of arms it can be heard. And today it still finds its use in martial camps. But always it has needed a steady lip, a courageous heart. No stuttering, uncertain call ever aroused a battalion to a charge. The notes must ring out clear and true.

"I am not applying this, as Paul did, to the mechanics of our speech. God has often used a weak voice, and a poor vocabulary, and a stammering

tongue to His own glory—yes, and to the quickening of courage in faltering souls. Witness the work of missionaries with strange languages. But I am thinking particularly tonight of the need of firm convictions. As far as I can learn, God has never used a double-minded man, nor an indifferent man.

"In these days in which we live, days of coldness and indifference to spiritual things, days of laxity in moral standards, of material prosperity and hilarious self-indulgence—in these days, if ever, young men and women of conviction are needed: young people who can give a trumpet call to rally once again about the standard of the Cross.

"Now, a half-hearted allegiance, an insipid, wishy-washy Christianity will never make a vital appeal. We must have certain convictions, and we must hold them with the tenacity of Paul; and utter them with the boldness and fearlessness of the early Christians.

"By this I do not mean to suggest a bigoted intolerance. I do not mean to suggest a bitterness toward those who differ markedly, perhaps, from our convictions. Not at all. We should have the utmost sympathy for them and their views; but sympathy and intelligent understanding do not necessarily imply compromise.

"The point of this brief discussion is simply this: As I stand here realizing that I am in my last year at Wharton, I am convinced anew of the unique spirit of our school. Here we have been given sound

reasons for the faith that is in us. Here we have had the privilege of studying under wise teachers who put their faith in God's Word, and guide their lives by its standards, and trust in its Lord. If we go out of here to be wavering spirits, uncertain trumpets, it is because we have failed to be seriously and sincerely interested in the most important subject in our curriculum.

"I regret deeply the opportunities I have wasted. I hope and pray that we all may come to realize, in the days that lie ahead, the value of eternal things, and may strive to gain a ring of sincere conviction which will rouse an indifferent people and engage them in the battle against the forces of evil in the world.

"I am always thankful for the testimonies I hear in this room which have that ring. I am still more thankful for the lives on this campus that speak in even more certain and convincing tones of the power of the gospel 'to every one that believeth.'

"At this time Mr. MacRae will favor us with a trumpet solo, and following that the meeting will be open for testimony and requests to be remembered in our united prayer."

MacRae had always been nervous in a new situation. He remembered the feeling he had had just before the whistle blew to start his first big game. But this was worse. He walked to the low platform with his hands shaking. Never had his heart beat

quite so loudly. He fingered the keys as Fay struck two challenging chords.

He heard his voice saying thinly, "I am playing a vesper call to worship. It is number eighteen. I should like you to sing the refrain with me after the second stanza."

During the brief rustling of leaves, Fay quietly announced the theme in chimelike chords. Then he put the trumpet to his lips. He had a way of doing it, a way of standing that was not the grace of repose, but the grace of a West Point bugler, the grace of military attention.

He thought only of the notes as he played, forgetting entirely the words he had read. His whole attention was concentrated in the effort to keep from making a false note; on trying to reproduce the silver smoothness and clarity of the afternoon. He found the former easy, the latter impossible.

The students thought it marvelous. But Fay was disappointed. She had heard a brilliant beauty in his tone up in the little music room that was missing now. His playing was still mechanically perfect, but it was artistically false. He knew that. She knew it. But few in the audience missed what they had never heard.

Away in a back row, as the second stanza was being played, a young cynical Freshman, recently graduated from high school as class valedictorian, and a little wise in his own conceits, listened to the pure melody with its rich accompaniment and read:

"While the deepening shadows fall,
Heart of Love, enfolding all,
Through the glory and the grace
Of the stars that veil Thy face,
Our hearts ascend."

And while he was reading the words, not far from him, old President Brainard, who had just slipped in to visit the student meeting, read the third stanza:

"When forever from our sight
Pass the stars, the day, the night,
Lord of angels, on our eyes
Let eternal morning rise,
And shadows end."

The Freshman, and the President, and the students all joined in the refrain:

"Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of Hosts!
Heav'n and earth are full of Thee!
Heav'n and earth are praising Thee,
O Lord Most High."

MacRae took his seat. It had been an impressive number, but he felt he had failed. He knew Fay would think so.

In the brief period of testimony that followed he gradually recovered a normal pulse, and was surprised to find that often several young people would be standing at the same time waiting their turn to witness to the power of Christ in their lives; to voice

their love and thankfulness to Him. He did not find it very hard to winnow the false from the true. Some rang like hollow brass; they spoke words. Some, with their humorous touches of real life, amused. One young girl, a missionary's daughter from China, told of how she had recently received financial aid in answer to prayer, and now she would not need to get up at five o'clock any more in order to bake the biscuits for breakfast at the Dorm. The three hundred laughed, as a crowd laughs, pleasantly. It is a happy sound when it comes in a serious meeting. But some of them laughed to hide a tear they felt gathering when she sat down. Some gripped you with the sincerity of their utterance. Some trembled as they witnessed publicly for the first time. Some requested prayer—for a sick father, an unsaved friend, a home church, a struggling mission, a local campus need; and some voiced an unspoken want, a personal request too intimate to mention to any but the Unseen Friend.

Then they went to prayer. MacRae was again surprised. The three hundred turned and sank to their knees. There is nothing essential about the particular position one assumes at prayer. It is a spiritual state which may be quite largely independent of its physical environment and formal position, but there is something unforgettable about a crowd of young people all kneeling.

The prayers were short, spontaneous, earnest, and definite. There were no embarrassing pauses of

mystic stillness between them, those periods that used to make him feel ghoulish at the church prayer meeting as a boy. This sort of thing was a totally new experience. These young people seemed to be talking reverently, but freely and lovingly, to an unseen Lord. You would think He was in the room. They thought He was, evidently. It was as if a crowd of common people bowed before a gracious Sovereign and several in turn addressed His Majesty, speaking for the kneeling group, bringing their needs to His attention, thanking Him for His goodness.

With his petition Craig closed the short period of prayer, which did not last more than fifteen minutes, and so did not become wearisome.

After the meeting, Craig thanked MacRae for playing, and MacRae in turn told the little fellow that for once he had listened to a sermon. There was truth beneath his jest.

Colburn, the president of the men's Glee Club, collared him as he went out and asked him if he would join the club. They wanted him for special numbers on their programs. He consented after a moment of deliberation.

That night he sat in his Morris chair and tried to unravel the twisted skein of his thoughts and emotions. He had begun to study his "logic" for Wednesday, but the book lay open on his knee while his eyes studied the pattern of the carpet at his feet.

He had not expected to run into this problem

when he came to Wharton to be near Fay Thurston. He had not expected to be influenced by its religious atmosphere. He had been disillusioned on this bunk for all time. He just wasn't religious, that was all. And yet if that were true, why did he feel guilty as others testified? Why did he feel empty and hungry as they prayed? Why did he thrill to their singing? Why did Craig's message make him so deucedly uncomfortable? It was curious, but this meeting had done something to him. He could never be the same D. Randall MacRae again. Either he would have to yield himself eventually to this Person, this Jesus they spoke so much about, or he would have to turn his back on Him, and harden his heart against all their appeals.

He had been suddenly awakened from his indifference to religion. He had been suddenly presented face to face with a Personality who gripped young lives and changed them. The indifference had to go. This Jesus claimed attention. A decision had to be made. What would it be? He was terribly muddled.

Oh, but, after all, this really was the bunk. It was good stuff. It sounded fine. It really helped a lot; but, of course, these folks hadn't read Tom Paine, and Ingersoll, and Voltaire, and Hume, and Shelley. They hadn't read Renan's *Life of Jesus,* or H. G. Wells' *Outline of History.* They still believed these myths had actually happened. They still thought this Jesus had performed miracles, and

had actually risen from the dead. It was funny how they could do so in this age of reason, this age in which science had proved miracles to be impossible. Unless miracles occur today, they have never occurred. They do not occur today. Therefore they have never occurred. Still, he tapped his "logic" book reflectively with a pencil, that wasn't exactly a logical syllogism. Something was wrong with the major premise.

For two hours he wrestled mentally with the problem, and at the end of that time he got up with a laugh.

"It's too deep for me," he yawned, and began to undress for bed. "Anyhow, these students are fanatical."

Unconsciously he had made a decision. It was against the Nazarene. The hardening process had begun. A deep impression had been laughed off.

CHAPTER TEN

The climax of the football season came early that year. The game with North Central was the third on the schedule. The home-coming fray with Logan would be rather an anticlimax. The North Central game was the game of the year, and it was to be at Neiderville.

It was a mid-October day, one of those days just made for football—clear, cool, and slightly windy. About noon the team's bus left for the neighboring town. The roar of its exhaust as it gathered speed around the corner of the Main Building was lost in the volume of cheers that rose in a long disorderly shout from the colorful crowd waiting excitedly for a quick lunch at the Dorm before it started for the scene of battle.

For many years North Central and Wharton had been bitter rivals. Perhaps their proximity added to the intensity of that rivalry. But it went deeper than merely school feeling. It was town rivalry. Wharton had been made the county seat after an almost riotous struggle. Enmity had resulted. The townspeople had thus found in the annual combats between their representative schools an outlet for this hard feeling. They set them on each other as a

crowd of boys will push forward two of their number already antagonistic, and urge them on.

But down the years of this historic small-college conflict, Wharton's orange jerseys had always drooped back to the dressing room, wet with the sweat of cruel effort, and chafing with the gall of defeat. Many times they had seemed about to grasp victory, but it had never been quite attained. The previous year they had lost by one point. In basketball they had turned in several victories, but never yet on the gridiron.

And yet, this fact, instead of disheartening the Wharton spirit, made it burst into more challenging flame every year at this season. Sometime that jinx had to be broken, and every year it was said, "This is our year." But never before had spirit run quite so high, because never before had the chances seemed quite so favorable as they did this year, with Captain Bruce playing his last season, and a backfield coached by "Trixy" MacRae of Princeton.

"Beat North Central!" had stared from every telephone post, bulletin board, and blackboard in the vicinity of the school for a week. They were out to do it.

It is curious how the flame of school spirit may be fanned. On Friday night fifty students in the school might have been found who could not possibly go to the game. By Saturday morning forty of that fifty had determined to go if going meant losing their jobs, or if they had to walk the seven

miles. Some of them did walk. The rest went in trucks, busses, private cars, bicycles, and motorcycles. There is no record of a horse-drawn vehicle, probably because they could not find a horse. At any rate, Wharton moved *en masse* to Neiderville that day.

As the long train of cars, headed by the band in a truck, wound slowly onto the field and deposited its living freight, the sound of North Central's sporting welcome came roaring across the striped turf.

"Hello—Wharton!
Hello—Wharton!
Hello—Wharton!
Wharton—Hello!"

An electric tenseness charged the air as the orange and blue section filled. North Central's crew was already on the field, running through a series of snappy signals that later changed to a punting and passing drill.

In the dressing room the Wharton men nervously tightened shoe laces and played with their helmets as Coach Griffiths finished his usual oration.

". . . Now, I've said about all I need to say. We've *got* to win this game. You *know* it. That means every man hitting his hardest until the final gun. And remember, when men fight for Wharton, they fight clean. The wind's northwest today, Hunter. Figure on that in your punts. When

you're into the wind, keep them low. That's all. Wendell, have you anything to say?"

MacRae watched him rise and admired him. He spoke as men of determination speak. But his voice seemed more deeply tragic.

"This is my last North Central game, boys. I'm giving everything I've got. If you do the same, we'll win. Let's go."

Slowly they rose and trotted out to the waiting crowds. The thunder of Wharton's cheers announced their approach.

With the snap and precision of a machine the orange line charged down the field in a short succession of signal plunges. For a time they received punts, tried some place kicks at the north goal, and handled the ball. Then they gathered in a group, heads bent and close as if in a signal huddle, arms about each other's shoulders. A minute passed in which the cheering was silent.

MacRae sat on the bench with Griffiths and mentally contrasted this picture with Palmer Stadium during a Yale game. Sixty thousand people there, great bands, airplanes droning overhead, a flock of reporters, another flock of photographers, a radio announcer broadcasting every play. And all over the country there would be rough fields like this one, where smaller schools would forget all about Yale and Princeton, forget about everything but the struggle before their eyes. Perhaps between halves they would listen to the scores read, but to each its

own little battle would be the most important in the country.

"After all," he thought to himself, "was I any bigger than this Wendell just because I got the publicity, because I was playing better football with a bigger team?"

His reverie was cut short as the cheering opened again with renewed force. North Central had won the toss. They elected to receive, and spread out in the open fan. Wharton lined up straight across the field behind the ball. The referee raised the whistle to his lips. The instant of silence was oppressive.

"Ready, Wharton?"

Captain Bruce held up his hand.

"Ready, North Central?"

The shriek of the whistle and they were off down the field after the spinning ball that arched low away toward the enemy's goal. A North Central back snagged it neatly, and started away swiftly, following the cleverly formed interference. He ran it back twenty yards before he was brought down.

Then began a march toward Wharton's goal, a march composed of line smashes, end runs, and off-tackle slices that in a surprisingly short time brought them within thirty yards of the last white line. The Wharton stands were pleading in the frantic voice a crowd has.

"Hold that line! Hold that line! Hold that line!"

The ball moved steadily on. Something was wrong.

Wendell called time out. The team dropped back for conference. With a calm disgust he removed his headgear and flung it toward the reserves' bench. His crumpled blond hair was already soaked with sweat. The men about him looked at the ground.

"Well," he spat out, "what's the matter?" Slowly he turned and judged the distance to the goal. "Fifteen yards more of this and the game is lost. Listen, fellows, you're nervous: so am I. We've got to get over it and hold them down. Listen to that."

From the Wharton section came the fighting song that ended in three staccato "rahs."

On the next play it was a bareheaded tackle who crashed through and dragged down his man for a five-yard loss. Somehow North Central failed on their next two attempts. They were bucking a new team, a team that fought with an insane determination. The first quarter ended with the ball in North Central's possession on their own thirty yard line after a wavering course up and down the field.

At the opening of the next quarter a punting duel gave Wharton a slight advantage. Both teams loosed an aerial attack that sometimes brought the stands to their feet with feverish excitement. Once a North Central end pulled down a beautiful pass and was tearing for the goal fifty yards away. But Bruce Wendell, with his almost uncanny football in-

stinct, had sensed the play and watched that particular end. It was a lateral pass, and the receiver had started down the side of the field. Wendell charged to cut him off. The runner was five yards inside the line when the Wharton captain left his feet. The force of his flying body carried his opponent almost that far out of bounds.

MacRae nudged Griffiths.

"He's got the stuff in him. I've never seen a better tackle than that on any field."

Griffiths nodded and pulled his collar up. He was nervously chewing a toothpick, and rubbing his hands. "Yeah; he's good, no question. Whatever was the matter with him last week, he's certainly playing a game today."

But just before the half closed the thing that Wharton dreaded happened. North Central worked the ball down to their opponents' ten-yard line and stole it over on a fake end run that turned out to be a neat pass to the other side of the field over the goal line. The ball sailed between the bars for the extra point, and the score stood 7–0.

Between halves the Wharton crowd romped onto the field and formed the living W. The surge of their songs and cheers came faintly to the battered team lying in the dressing room. It revived their drooping spirits.

The coach paced the length of the locker room like a caged lion. Wendell sat motionless. There were hard lines about his mouth, and his face was

streaked with dirt and sweat. Blood trickled from two gashes in his left leg. He always played without stockings.

Griffiths began his attack at last.

"This game isn't lost!" he roared. "I wish you would get that pathetic look off your mug, Martin; if you feel that bad, I'll take you out. You'll have the wind with you next period. That's a big advantage. Grove, how often have I told you to get under the play more. You're up too high! Get down! Let 'em go over you if they can, but never through you. The first man I see losing his drive for one play is going to be yanked. I've got men on the bench that are dying for the chance to fight."

He passed the stolid captain.

"Nice tackling, Bruce," he said. "How do you feel?"

"All right," he mumbled without looking up.

The second half opened with Wharton receiving; but North Central was out to hold her dangerous lead, and stopped the Orange and Blue eleven on the forty-yard line. With battering force they began to march toward the goal again.

Then something happened—suddenly, unexpectedly. Things do happen suddenly in football; that is one of the reasons why it resembles the game of Life.

The Maroons had called for another lateral pass. Wendell had noted the formation, and had told his

end to drive in and take out the interference. When the ball was snapped, he ran over to the right. The end was past him, but he had remembered the wind. The pass fell a little short—into his hands, and he was off in a flash. It was a beautiful sight to see him run. There was a power in his stride which you felt as you jumped up with the crowd and yelled madly. It was a sixty-five yard run. Three men tried to get him, but they did not come within five yards of him. He sprinted over the line, touched the ball to the ground, and tossed it out to the referee.

But Wharton's uncontrollable joy took a sudden drop as Hunter missed the try at goal by a foot, something he seldom did. It looked like the same old story, 7–6.

They lined up again, Wharton receiving. It became an agony to watch the battle now. Women became almost hysterical; men, almost crazy. When North Central had the ball, each play was an eternity of dread. When, at length, it came into Wharton's possession, hope was repeatedly drowned in despair. It was simply the fundamental emotion of the old gladiatorial arena. With the panting, weary bodies, every spectator was struggling. For the time nothing mattered but the straining struggle. That was life down there—life! With each snapping of the ball came the rasp of moleskins, the dull, thudding impact of charging bodies, the intermittent shrillness of the referee's whistle.

The crowd was on its feet steadily now, yelling

hoarsely and constantly. North Central was using the old call signals. They could hardly hear the quarterback bark his numbers above the disturbed sea-noise. Suddenly, came another break. North Central's fullback, although he was struck behind the line of scrimmage by a tackler, was seen still on his feet and swinging around right end. He went twenty yards before he was thrown. The crowd had followed his sensational spin wildly. Then they saw Captain Wendell lying motionless, face downwards, twenty yards back.

The Wharton men ran to him and the whistle blew time out. They turned him over. His face was twisted in agony and a groan started—but was cut off as he closed his mouth with a click of gritted teeth.

"Where is it, Bruce?" asked Griffiths, kneeling beside him.

"Shoulder," he said, with his teeth still clenched.

The left shoulder was out all right. They carried him off gently, intending to take him to the dressing room, but he would not hear of it. He wanted to see the finish. So, against their better judgment, they wrapped him in the blankets. He lay sobbing, not with the pain, but hysterically, because he wanted to go back. He wanted to play his last quarter.

Out on the field, before the whistle blew time in, quarterback Berry took charge.

"We've got to win now, gang," he growled. "Look at old Bruce over there; look at him."

They did. Over by the reserves' bench he lay, with tousled head, on his good arm. They could see the blankets agitated by the heave of his crying. It was pitiful to think of a strong man in that condition. He did not want to quit.

Wharton will not forget that last quarter. The team fought with a new energy. Both teams were almost dead with exhaustion. After every play they had a battle to regain their feet. It was a nightmare in which they tried to run from danger and found that they could not move. That pace could not keep up. One or the other had to go. At a certain point wrestling muscles, locked in terrible strain, suddenly give way. One weakens; one loses strength with the suddenness of a string snapping in the night. So it was in that last quarter.

Wendell raised his grimy face a little from the blankets just in time to see Hunter redeem himself with the winning touchdown and a perfect place kick.

During the last few minutes of play bedlam was let loose. North Central had to resort to the huddle system, as they could not hear their quarterback for the frenzy of the crazed stands.

The timer's gun put an end to the fray—but not to the noise. That continued all the way home until the old tower bell rang out the story of victory, 13–7, to the waiting town.

In the doctor's office Wendell suffered the keen torture of having the dislocated joint set. He was

then taken to a room in the "Y" House, where the matron could take care of him for two or three days.

There MacRae went that night to visit him. It was the first time he had ever been in the "Y" House. As he entered he heard the sounds of a riot going on somewhere on the second floor. He went up and took in the scene. Several fellows stood about the hall, laughing and hooting. From within a closed door came the bellow of a young man in rage. The door opened out; that is, when it opened. It happened to be the bathroom door, and it happened to be locked from the outside. The voice from within called:

"Open up, or I'll come out! Do you hear? Open up! All right. Here I come!"

A rending crash and the door, with part of the frame, flew outward! A long, young giant of six-feet-four lay stretched flat upon the door he had driven out. He arose clumsily and walked down to his room, leaving his tormentors to their discomfort. He went back to his violin, which he regularly practiced six hours a day, and he never went out for football. The noise having subsided temporarily, MacRae went down to the matron's apartment.

He found Bruce Wendell lying wearily against the pillows. His face showed he was in sharp and constant pain. MacRae took a seat. He never liked to visit anyone in suffering. It made him feel so utterly helpless. But he began:

"You certainly played some game, Wendell. I

was scared last week, the way you let down in practice. I thought they'd have the edge on us today. You certainly came through with the goods."

He was totally unconscious of the fact that he was making Wendell's suffering more intense.

Wendell said simply, "Thanks, MacRae. I had to do my best for Wharton. I love the old place. You get that way after three years here. It turned out to be my last game."

"That's tough. We're going to miss you terribly, and the season's not half over."

"Oh, they'll go now. The thrill of that victory will carry them through the other games."

They talked on for a short time; then MacRae rose to go.

"Well, I don't want to weary you. Is there anything I can do for you, Wendell?"

"No, thanks," he said; then, "Wait. Say, do you know anything about scouting?"

"A little."

"Could you take charge of my troop Monday night? I hate to disappoint the kids. I'll be all right for them the next week if you'll take it this once."

"Where do they meet?"

"At the Methodist Church—seven-thirty."

"K. O. Sure, glad to do it, Wendell."

He left with a deeper respect for the grim face on the pillows. High character was carved there. It had the strength of a figure by Michelangelo.

And the impression was deepened that Monday night when he took Wendell's place as scoutmaster. This was another means he had of paying his way through college.

Every boy in the troop had made Captain Bruce his particular ideal hero. They told MacRae all about him. Many things he already knew; many things he had not dreamed.

He went back to the gymnasium that night knowing that his chance had come to ask Fay Thurston for a date, but he felt like a cad. He was taking a mean advantage of a man's handicap. Still, it had to be done. He began to feel that he would have a tough time running Bruce Wendell a race. He did not know that the race was over before he started, that Bruce was out of the running.

But Bruce knew it only too well; and during the long hours when a throbbing shoulder would permit no sleep, he added to his suffering by remembering the touch of her hand, the lilt in her voice, the smile on her lips. And when you have loved for three years, it takes more than one night to forget. Perhaps you never can, quite.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

MacRae looked at the librarian steadily for five minutes before he finally rose and approached her desk. She was studying diligently; and in a fawn dress with an orange-and-brown scarf tied across her shoulder, she presented a study in brown. Her sleeves were long and skintight. Against her cream-white throat was hung an amber pendant. She looked up without haste when he stood before her. Frank friendliness was in her eyes, nothing more. He had a weak sensation in his stomach, but he cleared his throat and began in a semiwhisper, leaning forward with his hands on her desk.

"Fay, I wonder if you would care to go with me to the recital tonight?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. MacRae," she said, a little vertical line of perplexity between her curved eyebrows. "I'd like to go with you, but I have made arrangements to go into Chi this afternoon. I may not be back in time."

"Excuse a personal question, but are you going in alone?"

She nodded her head, smiling, and said,

"Quite."

"And returning in the same unprotected state?"

"I expect to."

"Well, couldn't I go in with you?"

"As far as I am concerned, I'd enjoy your company; but you'd have a tough time getting permission."

"Permission?"

"Surely. You don't think they would let a young man of your age take a young girl of my age to the wicked city of Chicago, do you?"

"But they would let you go in alone?"

"Oh, certainly. I'm much safer alone than with a nice young man." She laughed gently, with her pencil on her lips. There was no sarcasm in her tone, no bitterness, only humor at the rule which she, being young, thought a little foolish. "But really," she said, coming to the defence of the school she loved, as she noticed his frown, "they need that rule for some of the kids, and so they have to make it general. We pay, along with those that can't behave themselves."

"It hardly seems fair."

"Anyhow," she brightened, "you wouldn't care to attend this particular affair with me. I'm going to a Salvation Army conference in the afternoon."

"Oh, but I would!"

"Well, you can't."

"Hmm! I don't like getting turned down for my first date. I'm superstitious that way."

"I'm sorry."

"You look it," he jibed pleasantly as he turned to go, and as she settled herself again above the

history book, with the smile still at her mouth.

He sat down and looked out of the window across the campus. Autumn had come in all of its fresh glory. The campus was a symphony in blue and gold. The incense of burning leaves was not yet in the air, but the blue haze of October's dying breath drifted in the distance like the smoke that would soon float with the wind.

After a time he arose with determination and walked out to Coach Griffiths' home. The coach happened to be in.

"Hi, Griffiths," MacRae said brusquely. "I've got to go to Chi this P.M. Can you excuse me from practice?" It was the first time he had ever missed. He felt entitled to a day off. Griffiths had left him in charge twice. It was his turn.

"Sure, MacRae; I'm going light on them anyhow today," the coach said cheerfully.

He returned to the Library to ask Fay one more pointed question before the bell rang.

"What train are you taking in?"

"The two-thirty-two, electric. Why?"

"I've just found out that I have to go in myself and I may see you."

He left, as she began to gather up her books.

He was down at the Aurora and Elgin station at exactly two-thirty. He did not like to waste time waiting for trains, and so he frequently wasted more time missing them. The train, composed of two heavy cars, was in. He bought his ticket and

climbed aboard just as the compressed-air whistle gave a cracked-voice blast. The cars began to move almost immediately. Then he started to worry. "Suppose she's not on this train?"

But she was. He saw the back of her little gray hat, and the soft gray collar of her Fall coat. He walked down past her seat. Several seats were vacant, but he looked about as if he were trying to discover an empty one. Then he came back to her and said gravely,

"I don't like these crowded cars, do you? May I sit here?"

"If I get 'campus'd' what will you do?"

"I'll send you flowers. But surely they can't say anything if we sit together. This isn't a date, remember. You turned me down. I just happen to be going in on the same car."

"Oh, that's it? Do you really have to go in?"

"Absolutely."

"But you were going to the recital tonight."

"I'm not now."

"So I understand. But why this sudden change in your plans?"

"Oh, I was invited to attend a certain convention in Chicago."

"Where?"

"Now, that is a question. Do you know, I came away and forgot to find out the address? You'll have to tell me how to get there."

"What convention is it?"

"Salvation Army."

"Nita told me you were a tease."

"What else did she tell you?"

"Would you like to know?"

"No; on second thought, I'd better remain in bliss."

"But besides being a tease you are also a prevaricator!"

"That's a longer word, but it doesn't hurt me any less coming from you. You might as well use the four-letter synonym. Why the bad name?"

"You said you had to go in."

"I do. I have to see that you get safely there and back."

"Don't be funny."

"I'm quite serious."

By this time the cars had gained their open-country speed and were rocking along the none-too-heavy tracks at a dizzy pace. They would flash over a grade crossing with a shriek of compressed air, and bank on a curve like a circus coaster. They made good time, and to MacRae the trip seemed to pass in a few minutes.

As they came out of the maze of elevated tracks, out into the dingy terminal, MacRae paused at the door,

"Where did you say we go?"

"You can't come."

"But I *am* coming. Please don't stall. Where do we go?"

"The new Moody Church," she gave in, realizing that protest was useless, and being a little glad that it was.

The drive across town was more exciting than safe. If they had been going toward the station instead of from it, MacRae might have understood the reckless speed, the sudden stops at crossings, the jolting across rough places. They bounced together, and looked at each other with pitying sympathy that broke into jolly laughter.

The afternoon session of the great world-wide conference was to begin at four o'clock. They arrived early, and took seats in the balcony. Already the massive auditorium was filling. Huge bowls of stained-glass light hung by ponderous chains from the high arches of ceiling. Although the building was really a church, it did not have pews, but rather theater seats, with armrests. MacRae sat watching with interest the gathering crowd. The bands marched in, and he had to admit they could play.

Fay seemed to be watching for someone. He asked her if she expected company.

"Oh, no. I'm keeping an eye open for a very dear friend, though. She has given her life to the Salvation Army. She was the one who invited me in today. I hope I see her before the meeting."

Suddenly she nudged his arm. "There she is. I must go down and say 'hello.' I'll never reach her in the crowd afterwards."

"I'd better go with you, in case I lose you."

"No, no; you stay here and save my seat."

"You'll come back?"

"Of course."

Over the balcony rail he watched her edge down the crowded aisle to the Army section, filled with men and women in the red and blue uniforms. She put her hand on the shoulder of a little woman, who immediately rose and came out into the aisle to talk. Something about the woman reminded him of someone he had seen before. He tried vaguely to place her in his memory. The impression was as intangible as a dream, or a forgotten name. Finally he gave up and followed Fay's struggle back up the aisle.

Soon she was seated at his side again.

"You did come back!" he greeted her.

"Implying what?"

"That you know a good companion when you have one." Her laugh answered his unexpected comeback and repaid him with its music. "Do you know, I think I have seen your friend somewhere?" he said. "I never forget a face. I never remember a name."

"Oh, she's a darling. You would not forget her if you had met her. She went to school with my mother when they were both girls. She is a sort of aunt to me. Isn't it rather a coincidence that I should go to school with her son?"

"Rather. Who is her son?"

"You probably wouldn't know him. He's a sad case. He started in my class at Wharton, got in with the wrong bunch, and is now driving a taxi in the town."

"What is his name?"

"Jack Wentworth."

"Wentworth. I've heard that, too, before. Wait a minute." Soon the combination of the little gray lady and the name "Wentworth" resolved itself into a definite image.

"Oh, I remember her now." His face flushed. He started to say, "It was the night I saw you for the first time; she led me to you." But instead he explained casually, "I met her at the Brooklyn tent. Wasn't her husband a colonel, or something, in the Salvation Army?"

"Yes; how interesting! You should have come down with me. She'd like to meet you, I know. She loves young people. The way her son has turned out is a cruel blow to her."

"But doesn't she live in New York?"

"Yes. She is just here for the conference, and is coming out to Wharton, of course, to see her boy. But she can't do a thing with him. He has gone right down; gone fast. He drinks a good deal, runs off to Chi periodically. He never writes to her, and treats her like a dog when she comes to see him. It's awful to think that a chap can drop so far and so quickly. He used to be a fine kid. He is her youngest child, her only boy; and brought

up a little too strictly, I fear. His sisters were both lovely girls. They are in India now. One of them is married.

"When he came here he started out all right, but after repeated offences he was expelled a year ago. He had this job of taxi-driver while he was going to school and just kept it up when he was dropped. If he's ever caught drunk, he'll lose even that. Poor, poor Mrs. Wentworth. She's such a dear Christian. The devil couldn't have given her a harder trial. It's just breaking her down slowly. Her husband died, and then this had to come on top of that. She spends many a night praying for Jack."

MacRae listened to this story with mingled feelings. Since his early boyhood he had never known the touch of the mother he worshiped in memory. His maiden aunt had taken her place in the household, but she had not begun to take her place in his heart and life. His father had never understood him, had never attempted to. He had been engrossed wholly in the business of amassing a fortune to hand on to a boy whom he called his son, but whom he did not know as well as he knew his stenographer.

MacRae's mind traveled to his father as Fay talked. His mind had often done that in the weeks since their open break. He had neither written, nor received a word in that time. But his aunt had found out his address somehow and had written him

twice. He had answered her first letter briefly. Her second still waited his leisure. But his father —no! The old boy would come across before he would give in. He pushed the troublesome thoughts from his mind and addressed Fay.

"So they can go wrong at Wharton too, eh?" It was a little sarcastic, and wholly unnecessary. Fay seemed surprised.

"Yes; I'm sorry to say. It seems to take more than Christian environment and Christian heredity to save a human soul. It's strange, isn't it? He had every chance in the world."

The opening of the session with a hymn saved him from the necessity of answering aloud. But he kept turning the question over in his mind during the whole service. It was a problem. How did one account for a fellow, with every opportunity, going down, and a bum in the gutter, reached by the drums and coffee of these street preachers, rising to a life of decency, and value, and power? This woman could pull a drunk out of the pit, and yet she couldn't keep her own son from slipping into it. Something was wrong in this old world. Things didn't run right. He meant to ask Fay about that.

He became interested, near the end of the hour, in the dedication of six young lives to the work of the Army in foreign lands. In this solemn and beautiful ceremony the officers from these lands took part. They wore the Army costumes of the oriental countries. The sight stirred him. Here

was a world-wide organization, not laughable here, in the great auditorium, with hundreds of representatives and several bands, but pitiably funny to him on busy street corners huckstering their gospel wares above the noise of traffic and jeers. You had to admire their courage even while you laughed at their fanaticism. That was the decision he came to.

He watched Fay whenever he could, always covertly. It thrilled him merely to sit near her. She sat with the same simple attention which had so attracted him that first evening in the tent.

After the benediction they found it slow work to reach an exit, and still slower work to procure a taxi.

"You'll go with me to dinner, won't you?" he asked.

"I thought this wasn't to be a date."

"Well, there's no rule against taking a girl to dinner if she is already in Chi, is there?"

"I'm sure there must be."

"Unless you can quote it I'm going to take you." He signaled to his fifth cab. It went by, already full. After another wait, a "vacant" was hailed.

"La Salle Hotel, please," he ordered.

"That's my favorite too," she said, settling back in the luxurious upholstery of the heavy car.

They took dinner in the blue room to the sound of a splashing fountain and a dance orchestra. It was a table for two. He was glad of the opportunity to watch her eyes. They talked of pleasant,

ordinary things as they ate. A little element of formality stiffened their actions. They dined with that half-concealed, unaccountable embarrassment which two have who sit across a table alone for the first time.

As they rose, the orchestra slid into the melody of "In My Blue Heaven."

"Will you dance?" he asked courteously.

"No; I would rather not."

They walked to the richly furnished salon.

"Must we go home at once?" His voice was quiet. She turned to look at him. There was a clean gentlemanliness about his face. His crisp, sandy hair curled above a clear brow. Something in his blue eyes made her ask,

"What would you like to do?"

"I'd like to sit up there on the mezzanine balcony for a while and talk. I'll look up a train. Would you care to?"

"Very much."

When they were seated on a soft lounge in the dim light of a shaded lamp, looking down upon the main floor, gay with palms and people, bright with crystal chandeliers of exquisite workmanship, he felt a deep contentment that he had not often known.

"Why would you not dance with me?" he asked, suddenly serious.

"I don't dance."

"But you have danced."

"I have, yes."

"Well, why did you give it up?"

"For several reasons, none of which would interest you, probably."

"But they do interest me. Why would I ask you otherwise?"

"I meant they would seem foolish to you, and I'm not in the mood to amuse people tonight."

"That answer amuses me a great deal. It's rather an evasion. Won't you tell me?"

"If you laugh, I'll stop."

"K. O. Proceed."

"It's not a long story. Two years ago I heard Robert Harkness play at Wharton. He also told us the story of his conversion in Australia. That night I yielded myself in a new and complete surrender to Christ. Since then I haven't found my highest pleasure in the old merry-go-round. I can't explain it exactly. Things I had once thought essential to happiness suddenly lost their attractiveness. I loved to dance——"

"I could tell that," he interrupted. "Pardon me, go on."

"At Wharton, of course, it was banned. So I had not done much anyhow. But after that decision of mine, I had a talk with Prexy. He's one of the dearest men on earth. He quietly pointed out to me some of the results of the modern dance, in wrecked lives——"

"But——"

"Just a minute, please. I protested, as you are doing; I told him I could dance with a perfectly pure mind and had done so. He agreed with me. 'You may be able to do it,' he said, 'but there are some who are different, and the result—' he handed me some statistics that rather amazed me. 'Of course,' he said, 'if, as a Christian, you can be happy in dancing it is for you to choose; that is, after you leave Wharton. We cannot help but feel that the modern dance does not build up, but tears down.' Why not go and talk with Prexy sometime about it? I can't put it the way he did. At any rate, dancing does not particularly appeal to me any more. Perhaps I seem narrow, a bigot, fanatical, and all that, but I can't help it."

"So a Christian can't dance?"

"I never said that. I didn't want to talk about this, anyhow. We're putting the emphasis in the wrong place. We've begun at the wrong end. Are you a Christian?"

The question came suddenly and stopped the joke that was on his tongue. If it had come as it had from some others, he would have resented it and become angry. Some well-meaning fellows at Princeton had probed him with gimlet questions about his secret sins, with a view to bringing him, through confession, to repentance and resolution, but he had kicked them promptly out of the room. A man had given him a tract on a train once. He had immediately torn it up unread. In the tent

another had asked him the stock question, "Brother, are you saved?" He had said "Yes" to get rid of the fellow, and then cursed him behind his back for a meddling fool. But this question was put to him by a sweet girl who looked at him strangely as she waited for his answer. It was asked in a different way.

"Well, what is a Christian?" he parried.

"What do you think yourself?"

"I have no idea. I've been listening to preachers for years and haven't been able to discover yet what it's all about."

"Are you sure you were listening?"

"A good question. Well, I was trying to, sometimes. But what do you say a Christian is? I'm listening this time, anyhow."

"I would say he is a person who worships Jesus of Nazareth as God manifest in the flesh; who trusts in Him as the Messiah, the Saviour of all who believe on His name; and who is His disciple in that he seeks grace to follow his Master's example in his daily walk and conduct."

"Rather a complete statement."

"Of course, many, even some great preachers, who are coming to make the third step the only essential, would not agree with that. They insist it is essential only to try to follow Christ's teachings regardless of what one may think about His Person and nature. To them He is the world's great Teacher, nothing more."

"Yes, I've heard that a lot. You say you worship Him as God? How can you do that?"

"Because He claimed to be God, and He manifested the attributes of God—'in Him was Life'—and because I do not know God apart from Him. I can't worship a *Name*. I must worship a *Person*. I must know the Person to love Him. God the Father is essentially unknowable. In the Person of His Son He has revealed Himself to humanity."

"Say, where did you get all this theology? I can't follow you at all."

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be obscure. I am a missionary's daughter, you must remember. I was brought up on the Bible; and, since leaving home, I have played at summer conferences every year. Dr. Campbell has opened up the Scriptures wonderfully to me. Didn't you like him?"

"Yes," he said dubiously, thinking of the sting of some of his pointed utterances.

"But you haven't answered my question yet, Mr. MacRae. Are you a Christian?"

He paused for a moment and looked deep into her earnest eyes. Why was he sitting here in the La Salle Hotel in Chicago letting a girl ask him fool questions? Who was he, anyhow. He couldn't be "Trixy" MacRae, of Princeton. "Trixy" MacRae didn't do things like this, idiotic things like this! And yet he felt a sense of peace stealing over him. Something about this girl made him at once decidedly uncomfortable, and delightfully comfort-

able. He could talk to this girl about religion, somehow, and not feel like yawning in her face. She seemed to understand him as no one else did. But, on the other hand, she made him want to get up and leave. But first he had to answer that question. He stalled again for time.

"If you wouldn't call me 'Mr. MacRae' I might answer you."

"What should I call you?"

"Anything but Mister."

"Your middle name's Randall, isn't it? What's your first name?"

"I don't use it."

"Why not?"

"I don't like it."

"Well, I guess it will be 'Ranny' then." There was a coyness in the angle of her head as she looked at him, a coyness that was as captivating as it was unfeigned. "Ranny, are you a Christian?"

She would not give in, evidently. She was unmerciful.

"No; I guess not, at least according to your definition."

"Are you according to anyone's?"

"Well, I do my best to live a decent life."

"Which goes to show how words become corrupted through long usage. Originally the name 'Christian' was applied by pagans to a group of people who worshiped Jesus as Lord, and preached Him as Saviour, and looked for Him to come again

with power and great glory as King, and were willing to die for Him rather than deny Him. Today it may refer either to every Gentile to distinguish him from a Jew, or to every half-respectable citizen who tries to live by the Golden Rule—and who, of course, fails miserably."

"But what's the use of quibbling about a name? After all, what is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? We're all striving for the same thing, aren't we?"

"It is the difference between belief and unbelief —or indifference, which is just as bad. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.' The difference between you and me may not be a great one ethically. You may be as good as I am, even better. You ought not to be, of course. But both of us stand condemned in the light of God's holiness. The difference between us is that I am trusting Christ as Saviour. He has redeemed me from the power of death. I believe on Him. I love Him. I am seeking to serve Him in the world. What is your relationship to Him?"

"To be quite frank with you, I can't believe these stories about Him. They're fine. They're great literature. They're dramatic, intensely so. But they are not reliable history, that's all. Modern science has proved them fictitious, clever inventions, legends about heroic figures. What is more, I don't put much stock in Plato's strongest arguments for

immortality. His dualism is all off. It's the bunk. Just because some of us want to live on doesn't say we will. How do you know that a horse does not have the same idea?"

He paused, watching her. He expected her to appear a little shocked at his radicalism. He was disappointed that she took it so calmly.

"I'm awfully sorry," she said. "On that basis I can't imagine what you see in life that makes it worth living at all."

"Why, that doesn't affect life now. We all have to take death into account. Whether you believe that there is a life after it or not doesn't make much difference. The game is to make the most of this one."

"There you are wrong. If a man thinks he is not much higher than the beasts, not destined to do more than mingle with the common dust, he will live about on that plane. He will indulge his lower passions to the detriment of his spiritual capacities, to his eternal loss; for 'he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting!'"

She quoted Scripture with the ease of a thorough knowledge, but without the slightest trace of dilettanteism. MacRae felt that he was losing. His Scotch temperament told him to argue all the harder. If he had been conversing with a man, he would have done so. But he felt it was time to

change the subject. He wanted a chance to think this over in his room. And so he put an end to it.

"Say," he said hurriedly, "what time do you have to be in?"

"Ten-thirty."

"Excuse me, but we'll have to look up a train."

The journey home was made without reference to religion. Fay Thurston took the hint. She decided to let the seed work. To say more would be to spoil the effect of her testimony. Only when a person is eager to hear can the most effective and lasting work be done. She had learned that.

He walked as far as the Main Building with her and said, "Good-night," in front of the old tower. He said it softly, and went back to the Gym with her words ringing in his ears, her quiet simple words:

"Good-night, Ranny."

CHAPTER TWELVE

The next morning MacRae found among the three letters he extracted from his mailbox at the Main Building a tiny note envelope which he knew to be an invitation of some sort. It requested his presence at a Hallowe'en party to be given on Monday night by the Outside Girls. This ambiguous designation he had learned belonged to all those not rooming in the Dormitory. It included some of the best-looking girls, and also some of the faster set, as well as some very staid and prim maidens, the whole very much the same as the Dorm crowd, a rare mixture, with now and then a lump of sugar to sweeten the rather tasteless bulk. Nita had tried desperately to join the circle, their greater freedom being a supreme attraction, but her very activities in that direction had led to her enforced incarceration in Red Castle.

It turned out to be a gala affair, semimasquerade, in which the masks were omitted and the costume outfits varied from the outlandish to the beautiful, though none were elaborate. They were the kind of things a clever student could scare up by diligent begging and borrowing here and there.

MacRae climbed into an old Scotch Highlander uniform he had bought in a secondhand store once

to help him in some Scotch dialect readings he gave. He appeared as the wounded soldier. A white bandage swathed his head and crossed his left eye. It was not too clean, and showed patches of a brown-red substance that looked like dried blood. He limped with a heavy twisted cane, looked the part perfectly, and spoke with a Harry Lauder accent he had acquired by long practice and study. He had memorized whole passages of Burns, and the burr came easily to his tongue.

He was a natural actor and could put himself dramatically into a characterization with perfect ease. This had made him a valuable member of the Theatre Intime, at Princeton. He missed this dramatic work at Wharton. They did not put on any plays, did not believe in toying with human emotions, although they still studied Shakespeare in their classes. To him that was another asinine idea. But he resolved to show them the value of dramatic study at this party and he was an attractive success.

On arriving at the head of the stairs, he was surprised to see the work which had been expended on decorations. The Gym was a dimly lit cavern, in which there were various colored booths. Here and there flitted curious forms—clowns, street cleaners, chaps foolish enough to come in pajamas, dainty señoritas, silken Orientals, one or two gypsies, many nondescript costumes that amused by their ingenious absurdity. It was amazing how well a swashbuckling pirate outfit could be improvised from old

clothes. MacRae was forced to laugh heartily at some of the rigs. This informal stuff was really a lot more fun; he soon found that out.

The girls had evidently put much time and thought in preparation. The games moved with that tantalizing alacrity which made you wish you might wait just a little longer at each. None were allowed to become stale. All were unusually interesting, because of their novelty and variety.

You found your fair companion for the first event by choosing a string from a tangled mass and following its lead out of the maze of strings to the fair hand which held the other end. It might not be fair. You might be bitterly disappointed. You took that chance. You might also be delightfully surprised. In either case you had another opportunity later, for before each of the bigger games there was this innocent gamble for a partner.

In one of the contests each youth had to turn a Parisian modiste and fashion for his lady the most beautiful and original gown he could devise. He was given some pins, a pair of scissors, and a lot of newspapers with which to do the work, and it was to be fitted upon the living model. A prize was offered for the best.

For this MacRae had the fortune to have found on his string a tall athletic girl who could swing a tennis racquet and play basketball much better than she could carry on a conversation with a young man. But MacRae talked to her while he worked, as some

barbers do to their helpless victims, or as a chalk-talk artist sketches. She had a lithe, graceful figure and MacRae hated to wrap it in newspaper, but a bright idea came to him as he worked. She wore a *señorita* costume with a tight bodice. He decided to turn it into a Victorian evening gown by the drape of long silver-gray paper. The bodice was pink. He worked from the waist down; and, by the addition of a heavy-stuffed newspaper bustle, made the transformation quite charming, so charming that it took the prize.

One of the features was a trip through Wonderland. It began in dimness at the stairs leading into the basement. It soon plunged into absolute darkness. For this excursion into the horrible power of blackness MacRae had as a companion a vivacious young lady who lived in town. She was as full of pep as a thoroughbred filly. MacRae went first. She took his hand laughingly and clung desperately.

Whoever had planned this little tour evidently knew the basement. It had once contained two bowling alleys, but these had been long since abandoned. Few students had ever been down in its mustiness. But that night it became a pit of danger, in which you walked up narrow planks, feeling your way, and knowing not whither they led. You touched bare wires that had been given a low voltage current and the tingling sensation made you withdraw your hand with a screech. The darkness be-

came vibrant with mingled screams and bellows accompanied by bursts of laughter as someone overturned an unseen pail of water on his fair one's feet, or fell screaming a distance of thirty-six inches to a waiting mattress. Through the unknown and pitch-black labyrinth they moved, halting at times as some timid maid refused to go farther into the vale of horrors, or as someone came to the end of one plank and had not yet found the next, and stood pawing the empty air with his feeler of a foot. But at length they emerged at another stairway and saw the glimmer of light leading back to safety.

They passed into a gypsy's tent by couples and there had their fortunes read. MacRae would never have believed that a blonde Norwegian could make such a charming gypsy if he had not sat before her with his open hand in hers. He began to think that, after all, there were some fine girls here.

The horrors of Hallowe'en were not yet over. In a dark room those who entered were given certain articles and asked to name them. For this you waited your turn and went in alone. MacRae heard his little partner scream a couple of times and then he entered. Among the things that were handed him were two small spheres, soft, cold, and slippery. He could not guess what they were. He was told in a horrible voice by his unseen guide that they were the gouged eyes of a murdered child. He could understand the scream of his partner. He felt a

little squeamish himself. It amused him later to learn that two skinned grapes had given him that shivering sensation.

In another booth, fitted out as a barber's shop, several girls awaited each male customer. MacRae thought the one standing behind the chair particularly attractive. He took the seat as directed, and submitted to the blindfolding. A man in an electric chair had at least one advantage over him, if it might be called one, he knew what he was there for. MacRae had no idea. A sweet voice above him asked if he wished a haircut or a shave. He deliberated a moment and then said, "A shave," expecting to have his neck cut, or something of the sort.

Instead, he scented the delicate perfume of the girl behind the chair draw closer. She seemed to lean over him. Then he felt a gentle kiss upon his cheek.

"Umm!" he said, "my upper lip needs shaving too."

There was a roar of laughter from some of the "barber shop loungers." But they pushed him out of the chair. He had had his shave.

It was Pane's turn next. He was rather a bashful youth with a schoolgirl complexion and an uncontrollable blush. He was admitted at the shop door, as ignorant as MacRae had been as to what fate awaited him. MacRae was permitted to stay and watch the fun. When he did so, he also saw the joke which had been played upon him. After Pane's

choice, a young fellow stood up from his hiding place behind the high-backed chair. His face was powdered. With a clever tenderness he pressed a kiss gently upon the cheek of poor Pane. He turned a violent red. Then they took the handkerchief from his eyes and, still blushing, he retired from the chair as the crowd, which had been through the same experience, stood and laughed uproariously at his discomfiture. He did not dare to lift his eyes to the pretty barber who stood behind the chair.

When the next victim went through a similar experience, of course Pane also saw how completely he had been fooled. After the last chap had received his tonsorial treatment, MacRae spoke to the girl who had deceived him.

"I need another shave already," he said, rubbing his chin.

She laughed, and waved him off to the next event, which turned out to be the time-honored Hallowe'en custom of ducking for apples. There were several large tubs of water and many luscious apples. He watched one after another lose his or her dignity in the water and come up dripping, sometimes with red victory caught in the teeth, but more often with chagrin making the wet face more ridiculous than the water alone could do.

There were impromptu cracks, little comic side-shows of side-splitting humor. Some of the boys were really funny; not with magazine jokes, but with a lively and brilliant wit of their own. Over

all, from the Senior class president, who was so formal and dignified in a class meeting, to the funniest Freshman clown, the spirit of jollity seemed to preside.

After filling themselves with pumpkin pie and cider, they sang the "Alma Mater" and disbanded. MacRae ran down to his room and exchanged his kilts for a pair of trousers, and took Jean Culver to her home some distance out north Main Street. She was the spirited girl who had accompanied him through the gloom. She had attracted him; so he had asked for the privilege of seeing her home, and found it a most enjoyable trip.

He had had a great time. Indeed, when the evening was over, he told his image in the glass that he had never spent a more enjoyable evening at a party anywhere. Only one thing had been wrong with that party. He had missed Fay terribly. What fun it would have been to see her once in a while in the glad crowd; to hear her laugh; to chat with her over pumpkin pie and cider!

While he had been enjoying the party she was sitting in her room writing letters and talking to Nita. The study window was open a little for ventilation, and once in a while they could hear the shouting and laughter from the Gymnasium. It was hard on the Dorm girls. They had had their party the previous year in the fall and would have it in the spring this year. It was the Outside Girls' turn now.

Their conversation swung finally to MacRae. The

turn was caused by a question which Nita tossed at her roommate suddenly.

"Say, kid," she said, putting her book down with a slap, "do you know what I heard today?"

"I couldn't imagine. I hope it was something good."

"Yes; it was good all right. Somebody told me today that he saw you coming home from Chi Thursday night with Randall MacRae." She watched the effect of her words, but none was noticeable. Fay sat at her desk writing a letter. That fact did not stop Nita from probing further. "Well," she continued, "was it true?"

"Certainly."

"Hmm! so you break rules too, do you?"

"It was hardly my fault, Nita. You can't jump me for a thing like that. You don't know the circumstances."

"Not your fault! Explain."

"I don't see why I should."

"Of course, you don't have to. I'm interested, that's all. Are you rushing Randall too?" There was a touch of scorn in her voice. "I like to know my opponents before the battle."

Fay was quite serious. She had already learned how inflammable was this girl's temper; how cruelly jealous she was; how constantly selfish; how unbearable she could be if she took a grudge. She was a spoiled child. She lay half reclining on a couch, with three pillows at her back and a book open,

face downward, at her elbow. She looked almost voluptuous in the soft, blue silk negligee, with its tan ostrich feathers floating like dusky clouds at the sleeve edges. Her black bobbed hair was crumpled with a careless charm.

"Aren't you a little unfair to suggest that I would rush anybody?" Fay said, making meaningless marks with her pen on a scrap of blotter.

"Oh, pardon me, I forgot. You are one of these demure Victorians, who believe that the elusive nymph is the conquering female! Well, go on. Are you going to explain?"

Fay controlled herself with difficulty. Nita could be terribly nasty. Her tongue bit like an adder's, and she never took back a word once it was spoken. She left it where it struck to rankle and fester. Fay was convinced that this was going to be her hardest year at Wharton. It took all of her self-control and all she could appropriate of divine grace to keep sweet at times. No misery is quite like that of living, and studying, and sleeping day in and day out with a person who jangles on your nerves as does a repeatedly struck discord in a lyric of Schubert's played by a beginner. It is a particularly unpleasant form of unhappiness.

Fay's conscientious life, her studious habits, her gentle disposition, only made Nita Carlsen dislike her the more. To have someone about who is a continual condemnation is odious. You begin to suffer as under a galling burden. You look for inconsist-

encies and shortcomings with a Sherlock Holmes lens, and when you find them you make the most of them.

Fay wondered if she should say anything. She knew that silence would enrage her roommate beyond endurance. But what to say? She decided to be perfectly honest.

"It was really nothing to interest you, Nita. Mr. MacRae asked me to go to the recital that night. When he learned that I had made arrangements to go to Chi, he insisted on going along. I turned him down, but I'm not quite informed as to the correct means of driving a young man away when he sits next to you on the train and insists on escorting you to your destination."

"So it is 'Mister' MacRae!" she accented the 'Mister' contemptuously. "And he was mad for your company! He wouldn't take 'no' and dragged you about Chi by the hair! How interesting! I did not guess there was such fervor in the gentleman. He has possibilities."

"Either you are insanely in love with him, Nita, or you don't care a snap for him; otherwise you wouldn't talk in that silly fashion. In either case, I advise you to let me out. I'm not interested."

"Oh, no?" Few people could use sarcasm more effectively than Nita. "You are content with your big, brave Bruce, are you?"

"Nita!" Fay's eyes flashed when she was aroused. "If you say another word, I'll leave the room."

"I'll miss your company so much," came from the pillows.

Quietly, and without the slightest flourish, Fay picked up her fountain pen and stationery and walked across the hall to Grace Howell's room. When she returned an hour later, "211" was dark. Nita had gone to bed sulking.

Over in the Gym, Craig ate two pieces of left-over pie and brought a gallon of cider down to his room. That was all of the party in which he would share, except the long hours of cleaning up the Gym afterwards. He had sat down in his room with Bruce Wendell while the clatter, and laughter, and yelling had gone by him, and over him, and all about him. He had studied Greek through it all, as if he were a monk in a cloistered library instead of a student in a chamber of noise. Bruce had tried to study, but had given up and gone to bed. With his crippled shoulder, dressing and undressing were long, slow, and crude processes.

MacRae had asked Jean Culver why Wendell and Craig were not at the party, and learned that it was because Craig did not bother with girls, and because Wendell went steadily with a Dorm-dweller.

When you are invited to a girls' party, you may be sure that someone considers you an eligible and desirable male; so MacRae decided as he walked home that night. But it was a good party for all that—if only Fay had been there.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The remainder of the football season went quickly. That period of school life seems to be particularly swift in passing—always. To MacRae it meant the completion of his work; it meant a few weeks of official dignity before he should retire once more to the rank of a plain student. And so he worked hard. He threw all his energies into the task of polishing the technical ability of the players in his particular charge. And it was not without its reward.

Following the great victory over North Central, destined to go down in Wharton history as the turning of the tide against their ancient rivals, the Wharton team rode the crest of the wave as Captain Wendell had predicted they would. They took the next three games straight, thrilling the crowd of Alumni who returned at Homecoming by downing the fast Logan squad 16–12. Unfortunately, in the last game of the season Hunter was injured, and the others suffered a let-down which resulted in a victory for Deland. Up to this point the team had shown continuous improvement, and much of its success was attributed to MacRae.

And so, it was natural that he should be asked to make a speech at the football banquet given by

the Freshman Class in honor of the team. He learned that he had been assigned to the last place on the program; and having often been bored by the after-dinner marathons of some ex-heroes, he immediately determined to cut his speech as short as propriety would allow, and thereafter gave the matter little thought until the afternoon of the banquet.

It was the week before Thanksgiving recess. He went that afternoon for a long walk in the brisk November air, under gray, scudding clouds and past dry, hard fields of stacked corn. That was invariably the way he prepared for a speech. He was no Demosthenes, mouthing pebbles and shouting at trees, but he found that he could fashion a phrase in the open much easier than in a close room. And he enjoyed speaking. Ever since he had been a tiny lad he had liked to face a crowd and give a piece. His only nervousness came just before he spoke, or when the words failed him, when he rummaged around in his mind for the right tool, when he could not find the phrase he wanted. Then he became panicky; but that seldom happened. He had a fluent tongue.

Upon his return from the four-mile jaunt, he passed the Chapel on his way to the Gym. November dusk had settled. In the west it was a gray blanket being drawn over a faded old-rose quilt. The lights were on in the various campus buildings. As he neared the Gym, he heard a throbbing of

music coming from somewhere in the heart of the dusk. He paused and located it in a moment. It came from the Chapel organ. Once before, in Princeton, he had had this same subtle emotion that moved him now. He had heard the great organ in the cathedral chapel at the hour of twilight when no radiance came from the high windows.

He turned and walked over to the Chapel. It sent out no light, only soft harmony. He was curious. Often he had heard students practicing on the organ, but never at this hour without light. As he approached closer the tremulant chords became more clearly enunciated, and he recognized Handel's "Largo."

He entered quietly and walked around through the choir rooms and vestry, behind the auditorium, to a door that opened onto the platform where the organ console was placed. It was much dimmer inside the building, almost dark. The crescendo passage of the mighty music had begun. It was mounting to its closing triumph. He reached the door. It was half open, and at the console he made out vaguely in the shadows a girl's form. She was not practicing, but playing purely for her own enjoyment, for the delight of loosing rich voices from silent pipes and listening to the harmony of their mingled chorus.

Before the echo of the last shouted chord had died away in the balcony at the rear, MacRae recognized the form, whose back was to him. It was Fay

Thurston. She sat now pensively, after a moment of silence, her hands wandering across the manuals, seeking through melting transitions the inspiration for her next melody.

He stepped out on the platform, purposely making a noise to attract her attention. She turned with a quick start at the sound of his step.

"Why, Fay," he said quietly, "I didn't know you played the organ."

She knew his voice before she could make out his face, and stopped playing.

"I don't," she protested, "except for myself."

"That's the first bit of selfishness I've been able to discover in you," he countered. "Would you permit me to join the inner circle for once? I did not mean to stop you. I came in to listen." He sat down in a near-by choir seat.

"You will think I am silly and sentimental, playing in the dusk this way, but I feel as if the organ were made for this hour. I can't get the effects I want on the piano."

"I think you are far from silly and sentimental. I think you are an artist. You feel the beauty of an hour and you interpret it; you make me feel it. Please play on."

The windows were dim amber panels in a wall of gloom. The white keys of the organ manuals gleamed against the background of dark mahogany. Once again the auditorium, with its rows and rows of empty pews, trembled into the vesper beauty

of evensong. He marveled at the ease with which she flicked stops that he could not distinguish in the darkness. As he listened he closed his eyes. He had never felt a more absolute sense of peace, of the unutterable calm that music brings. Too soon it was over, and she was asking him for the time. He could barely make out the hands of his watch.

"Five o'clock," he informed her, after a careful examination.

"Really!" she exclaimed. "I must go. I promised to try over a number with Harris Glen. He is to sing at the banquet. So I'll get to hear you. Isn't that nice?"

"It's tough, I would say," he replied, wondering why she had said that. Bruce Wendell was to speak also.

"Have you your speech all ready?" she asked, as she closed and locked the console.

"I think so."

He walked over to the Main Building with her, and then hurried to his room to shave and dress.

But first he sat for half an hour with his shirt half open going over and over in his mind a simple remark, "So I'll get to hear you." A smile came and went on his face. She was a darling. Was it possible she really liked him?

He had had so little opportunity to talk with her during the fleeting days since that first date, that first long talk; but he had done a lot of thinking. He had gone to the prayer meetings regularly, to

church every Sunday, and to chapel every day, but still he felt skeptical about the whole business. Many of his former teachers and most of his intimate friends had been frankly, uniformly, and continuously agnostic in matters of religion; some a little proud of it, as if it were the mark of the most cultured and progressive intellects. It had been quite natural for him to assume the same attitude. Skepticism had finally opened the door to indifference. His contacts with Fay Thurston were the only occasions upon which it left him, and these were immediately succeeded by hours of such miserable mental conflict that he was glad to drown the whole mad question in the cup of mockery.

He was not naturally irreligious. On the contrary, his Scotch ancestry had given him a mind prone to wander in the deep speculative realms of philosophy and religion. When but a lad he had had to learn his catechism by rote. Even yet he could repeat many of the more rhythmic passages. But at university he had concluded that there were infinite numbers of divergent beliefs; and from this conclusion he deduced that it made little difference which you took, since you could never know whether you had the truth or not. Religion was all purely subjective; and, since it did not matter which you took, it could not matter greatly if you took none.

In contrast with this shadowy, indefinite haze

surrounding the subject of religion he seemed to find a clearly defined body of truth in his scientific courses. Here you *knew* what you knew. And when he was told that our race had evolved from lower forms of life through millions of years of mutation, and development, and selection, and was given proofs of it in charts, and drawings, and museum groups, he submitted to the overwhelming evidence, the leaning tower of facts, and became convinced that here, at least, was a realm in which we might attain definite knowledge, absolute truth. Somehow he failed to see that perhaps every ten years scientific textbooks had to be scrapped; that above the accumulation of waste, a few enduring principles remained to guide the seeker for truth in the realm of the physical sciences. He had failed to note that the cases were absolutely parallel; that in religion, as in science, we have a substratum of fact upon which all knowledge must be built. In throwing over, with the majority of half-informed students, this factual basis of religion, he had unwittingly given up his only hope of finding a religious faith that would ever satisfy himself.

It plagued him to find the young people in this school so seemingly cocksure. They studied the same scientific textbooks that he had studied, but they were ridiculous enough to interpret these modern texts by the ancient documents of a few half-baked Hebrews, instead of judging these mythical

manuscripts by the modern mind. They were just a bunch of silly old fossils! And yet they were not that.

He wanted to call them that, to put them in that category. But Fay would not be put there. Strong, manly Wendell refused to fall into that classification. Clever, good-natured Craig was out of it. One after the other he reviewed the friends he had made since coming to Wharton. With a few exceptions, they stood before him as types of clean young manhood and womanhood. They had the same joys and sorrows, the same temptations and difficulties that all young people have in common; but they seemed to walk the world with a high purpose, and live with a strange peace, and move with a courageous determination. It bothered him.

But so tenacious is the grip of skepticism when developed into positive unbelief from the fledgling of honest doubt that it once was; so vice-like is its enervating grip when the kitten of sincere Agnosticism has grown to the tiger of Scorn, that MacRae found it wholly impossible to reconsider fairly a matter which he had already decided was quite irrational.

Once again, Fay's playing, in the dusk this time, had given him pause. It had always had the same effect, from the first chord he had heard struck in the Brooklyn tent. Oh, well, he did not have time for the tomfoolery. He had to shave, and dress, and look up a joke before the banquet.

He rose with a jump, shook off the mood, and finished removing the shirt which he had partly unbuttoned half an hour before.

Lower Chapel was the banquet hall. It had been artistically decorated and arranged for the occasion by the Frosh. Several representative girls of the class acted as waitresses, with that curious mixture of dignity and embarrassment which accompanies the rare duty. It was for many of them a labor of hope, if not of love.

When the *demi-tasse* was drunk, and the last nut eaten, and the tables cleared, the chairs were pushed back, with much scraping, and the program was opened by one of the young professors acting as toastmaster. His wit was keen, but subtle; and he had a way of telling a joke that turned all of his audience into Englishmen, and uproarious ones, when the point was eventually seen.

Colburn led a snappy musical five which had to play more encores than even they had figured on, and they themselves thought they were pretty good. After the banquet, they were sure of it.

Prexy Brainard spoke first, in his usual quiet, unassuming way. Captain Wendell sat on his immediate right, and the old hand, trembling a little after half a century of labor at Wharton, rested affectionately on the blond athlete's injured shoulder as he spoke. You noticed it, and you wished you were sitting there. There was something of patriarchal benediction in the touch of the still graceful

hand. It was no mere gesture; but rather the unconscious overflow expression of his deep love of youth, a love which drew men to him as they had been drawn to his Master.

Following him, Captain Wendell was introduced. He rose to cheers and long clapping, and stood with his eyes on the table and his hands behind his back, waiting for the din to subside. It did eventually, and he spoke briefly. His deep voice held a quaver of emotion as he told touchingly what Wharton had meant to him; what a privilege it had been to captain a Wharton team for two years; how he had regretted sitting on the bench for half of his last season; how he had come to admire and love the chaps who had fought beside him. He closed with characteristic humility, giving high tribute to the heroic scrubs, and to the faithful work of the coaches.

Three other letter men were to graduate, and were called on for short speeches; after which Captain-elect Gates pledged his best for the coming year.

Then Harris Glen, accompanied by Fay Thurston, sang a rollicking ballad. Glen's baritone was the favorite voice on the campus. It was as rich and mellow as a French horn. For an encore he sang, by unanimous request, his famous rendition of the greatly beloved "On the Road to Mandalay." Fay's accompaniment was as interpretatively artistic as usual; MacRae thought it was even more so. He wished she had not come. His ideas were getting

all tangled up. If he made a miserable failure, she would be to blame.

Coach Griffiths presented Wendell with an honor sweater and read the list of letter men. He reviewed quickly the record of the season and gave his hopes for the next fall. MacRae did not hear much that he was saying. He was always terribly nervous immediately before a speech, though the nervousness invariably vanished the moment he was on his feet.

He laughed mechanically with the crowd at the Scotch joke the toastmaster told by way of introducing him, and rose graciously. The applause was again loud and prolonged. He decided to omit the wise-crack he was going to pull on Professor Miller, and began:

"Mr. Toastmaster, visiting friends, and members of the Varsity football squad: It is with curiously mingled feelings that I address the first Wharton football team to lick North Central. Let me explain. I have heard some of you say that it was my coaching which gave you the edge this year. That is entirely false. You were bound to win this year. If any one man deserves especial credit for that victory, it is Bruce Wendell—" He was interrupted by a burst of clapping. He waited motionless until it had ceased and then continued: "Unfortunately, I can claim no credit for coaching him. Neither can Mr. Griffiths entirely. He is not the product of any coach. It seems to me that he is the product

of the Wharton spirit; that he is the incarnation of it.

"And it is of that I wish to speak a moment. I speak as a stranger in your midst, a stranger whom you have welcomed with the warmest cordiality, but still a stranger to most of you. It is my fault, not yours. I am the product of another school spirit quite different from your own. I love it. I cherish it. I shall always do so. That is natural.

"But when I came here, I was soon met by a something which I could not explain. Just tonight, returning from a walk, I passed the chapel and heard a mysterious voice of music in the dusk. For a time it puzzled me, the while it attracted me with its beauty. That is the way I feel about the Wharton spirit.

"I feel it everywhere: in the dressing room, on the field, in the classroom, at the Dorm, in the Chapel. I feel it, but I cannot explain it. I admire it; yet I cannot enter into it as I should like to do; I cannot become a part of it. I am a stranger here, and yet a stranger who walks within your gates with reverence, with appreciation.

"It is my hope that, as I now drop back to the status of student again, with no remnant of authority to keep me straddling the uncomfortable fence upon which I have been sitting these past weeks, I may in a real sense enter into the Wharton spirit, and that, in doing so, it may enter into me.

"I congratulate you as a team on the privilege

that is yours in representing such a school. I congratulate you on the fine way in which you have represented it. It is my wish that next fall you may be yet more successful in the matter of scores; you could scarcely be more successful in the matter of spirit. If that continues to live and move in this school as it does now, you will continue to represent a unique college."

He sat down and the nervous reaction swept over him. He had not said anything he had planned to say. He felt he had terribly failed. That was no football speech. What had ever gotten into him? Why hadn't he given that sparkling five-minute oration of his on the value of football in training a man for the battle of life? It was that organ in the Chapel that had thrown him off! It was that orchid dress at the door!

While he was condemning himself and wondering what streak of idiocy had caused him to say those things, the hands were clapping with sustained force. There were whistles, and yells, and pounding on the tables. The continued ovation embarrassed him.

They closed the evening in the usual way by singing the "Alma Mater," and that night they rose with a new dignity, and sang with a deeper loyalty:

> "O Wharton, dear old Wharton, live forever!
> Brave sons and daughters true,
> We will e'er uphold thy colors:
> The Orange and the Blue."

It had taken a stranger in their midst to arouse them to a fresh consciousness of the uniqueness of their school.

When MacRae could finally push his way to the rear door through outstretched hands, the orchid dress was gone; the brown hair and the shining eyes were gone. They had gone back hurriedly to a Dorm room. Happy they were, and just a little excited.

The football men talked about that speech for a week. It was not the expressive vitality and clearness of his English, nor the pleasing tone of his voice, nor anything dramatic in his actions—not any of these had produced the enthusiastic effect upon his hearers. They had aided much, of course, but it was that inexplicable magnetism of personality which distinguishes the gripping speaker from the most polished speechmaker.

Two days later he found a note in his box asking him to call at the office of the President at his earliest convenience. He went early the next morning, wondering what it could mean, and imagining all sorts of possibilities as he sat in the anteroom awaiting his turn.

When it came, he was not kept long in doubt. President Brainard saw him seated and began:

"Mr. MacRae, I was deeply impressed by your words at the banquet the other evening. I have taken the matter up with the faculty, and it is our united desire, subject to the Board's approval, of

course, that you be asked to take over the position of head athletic director here next fall. Mr. Griffiths is retiring from the work as coach to take up, at a higher salary than we can afford to pay at present, an offer he has received from a business firm. He will, of course, finish out the year with us. Will you consider the position?"

MacRae was completely surprised. He had anticipated nothing of the kind. Besides, he had given no thought to what he should do next year. It had never entered his head to worry. The question had naturally never bothered him at Princeton. His father's office was open and waiting for him. But now that door was definitely closed. What could he do? He thought rapidly over the field, and stalled for time with the question:

"What are you able to pay at present?"

"We can offer you twenty-five hundred."

MacRae was tempted to laugh. How could he ever live on twenty-five hundred a year? He could never get anywhere on that. It was absurd. He would be making that much in a couple of months with his father. Perhaps he had been a little hasty in breaking with the old man. Well, he had friends in business. There was the advertising game. He liked that. He had been good in psychology. His friends could get him placed in something at least twice as profitable as this paltry job. Twenty-five hundred! But the steady, luminous eyes were upon him. They demanded an answer.

"I'm afraid I cannot accept, Dr. Brainard. In some ways I should very much like to do so, but I have other plans. I intend to go into business. I appreciate the honor of your offer."

"I'm sorry, MacRae," said the President sadly. "I've seen great possibilities in you. You are fitted to lead men, young men, athletic men. That night you played your trumpet in prayer meeting, and again when you spoke at the banquet, I thought of a figure of speech to describe your case. You are your trumpet. You are a beautiful instrument. You have been fashioned well and have been endowed with natural graces. You could be used to call men into the service of the Master. You could be used to voice a challenge to young men of today; but until the Spirit of the living God is allowed to breathe through your life, it will fall short of its glorious promise, far short of the purpose in its creation. I tremble for you, MacRae. I should hate to see you lose your life when you might find it so richly. Oh, that Christ had your talented young life at His disposal; that you might be His trumpet; that He might speak, and sing, and call through you until young men would answer and yield!"

The calm, unperturbed voice was almost as though the speaker had forgotten that MacRae was in the room. It went on, as if praying aloud, and alone, "O Lord Jesus, 'take this life and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to Thee.' Don't let this silver trum-

pet tarnish in the plush-lined case of its own selfish pleasures. Put it to Thy lips and let it sing Thy praise and turn men to Thee."

MacRae knew he would never forget the emotion of that hour. A beam of the morning sun, just breaking through a cloud, fell across the noble white head of the man in black sitting with his back to the window. The vision was almost apocalyptic in glory. MacRae felt something strange taking place within him. Above the clash of opposing forces he seemed to hear a cry of victory. As quickly as he could, he brushed a tear from his eye, cleared his throat, and said,

"I'm sorry too, President Brainard, that I don't seem to be the man you wanted."

"Oh, you are the man, all right. If you change your mind, let me know. I'll hold the position open as long as I can with safety. Good-by, MacRae; God bless you, lad. I'm praying for you."

He walked out into the bustling hall in perplexity. Classes were just changing rooms and the swirl of eddying crowds caught him up and carried him to his next class. He sat through it in deep thought. The problem had come too quickly. He had been totally unprepared. But, gee! it was tough to turn him down. What a prince he was! Dear old Prexy Brainard! Twenty-five hundred a year! That wasn't bad as a start for a young coach, but it sounded pitifully meager to him.

Through that hour of mental struggle, while the

questions and answers of the class recitation drifted about him unnoticed, he came to a consciousness of the fact that this was to be an important decision in his life. If he took the position, it meant a life of sacrifice. If he turned it down, it meant a life of selfishness. There was no way out of that dilemma. He could not fool himself into thinking that he would go into advertising to help people select the best and most economical products. He could not be that scrupulous and succeed. It would be for himself; to show the old boy that he could stand on his own feet and make his own fortune. Yes; he had to do that. To that he would dedicate his life. He would show the old man.

When the bell rang again at the end of the hour, he had pushed aside definitely the opportunity for service which had been offered him. He had closed the door on any possibility of entering into the Wharton spirit, which he admired so much secretly, but which he could not understand. Henceforth he might be a student, a plain student, one of themselves; but he would still be a stranger in their midst.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

That very afternoon MacRae began to function as a private citizen of the school, and the particular way in which he was to assume the rôle was by playing with the Senior Five in the opening game of the annual interclass basketball tournament. This exciting intramural contest was always staged at the very beginning of the basketball season. It was the coach's method of sizing up his material for the varsity squad, and he kept his eyes open for new men, or for signs of improvement in old sharpshooters.

And so he was keenly interested to learn that MacRae intended to try out for the varsity. By accepting five hundred dollars for his coaching services in football he had put himself in the professional class in that sport, but he was still an amateur in basketball, and had only played one year on the varsity at Princeton. He could have made first string earlier, but he refused to train after football was over, and consequently could not hit the pace required, although he had the ability.

He dressed hurriedly and joined the Seniors in their locker room. They had a poor team, with no representative on the varsity. They had had little opportunity for practice, and MacRae had been

present only once, but his exhibition that once had ensured him a place and caused much comment on the campus.

Their first game was to be with the Juniors, who had won the banner the previous year. They had the same team on the floor this year. The interclass spirit was always at high pitch for these games. A good crowd gathered for the opening round and watched the Frosh go down quickly under the flying attack of the Soph team, led by their captain, who was also the captain of the varsity, and one of the fastest forwards in the state.

The coach and the Wharton basketball fans watched the next game carefully and excitedly. Basketball was the major sport in the Midwestern school. In this event they always put out a fine team. Word had spread about MacRae's smoothness on the floor. They turned out to see if the rumor were another bubble or not.

MacRae had kept in excellent condition by his work on the football field every afternoon. His muscles were solid and supple with a springy resilience that made him move with beautiful grace. When following up a shot, he seemed to ride the air. On the floor he handled the ball with that sure deftness which is a delight to watch. He seldom used the backboard. Ordinarily the ball left his hands in a high arch and swished through the net cleanly. From the foul line he could drop four out of five without touching the rim of the basket.

Everyone had noticed this in the preliminary warming up. Then the whistle blew and the ball was tossed at center. It was MacRae *versus* a good team of five men, and, of course, the five men won. But it was not obviously MacRae alone. To the Seniors it seemed as if MacRae was rather a flop. They noticed that he made only two baskets. What they did not take note of was the fact that he took only about six shots at the basket during the game, and that he was playing a whirlwind defence. He had early decided that the Juniors had a fast, smooth combination. He knew that if he played his usual aggressive game without much support from his defence, the Juniors would only run up a bigger score. So time after time he dropped back and broke up their passes and dribbles, tied up opponents for a "jump ball." He attempted nothing spectacular; and so, when the Seniors went out defeated, 14–9, they were not slow in saying that MacRae was "not so hot." He might be able to drop them from any angle before the game, but in actual competition he did not show up.

Among the Senior girls, who crossed in a group to the Dorm afterwards, Fay was the only one who maintained that he was "some player."

"Do you know, Jan," she said to the tall captain of the Senior girls' team, "I think we ought to ask him to coach us this winter."

Since he was at least better than the rest of the Senior team, Janet Cross agreed, and asked Fay to

act as a committee of one to interview the gentleman on that score.

So the next morning in the Library it was Fay's turn to approach his desk. He thought she was coming for a book in one of the stacks near him, and when she sat down across from him, he was totally surprised.

"Mr. MacRae—" she began, but he cut her short immediately.

" 'Mister' still? I want you to know that I've attained the rank of fellow-student at last. What other individual in the class do you address so formally?"

"Well, Ranny, then; I've been asked to represent the Senior girls' basketball team and present you with most solemn overtures to act as our coach this winter. Will you?"

He looked her fully in the eyes frankly for a moment, seeming not to have heard her question. She was embarrassed at what she read in his gaze, and said hastily,

"Well, yes, or no?"

"Pardon me, I'm stupidly rude. I forgot to listen after you called me 'Ranny.' What was your question?"

She ignored his remark.

"I asked you if you would act as coach for our Senior girls' basketball team. It is the custom for the girls' class teams to get some varsity man in their own class to coach them."

"But I'm not a varsity man."

"You will be."

"What a delightful assurance! What makes you think so?"

"Oh, the way you handle the ball. I can tell. When you're playing with fast company, you will show up. But that's not the point. Once more: yes, or no?"

"Yes, with pleasure. 'If we fail, we fail.'"

"'We fail! But screw your courage to the sticking point and we'll not fail.'"

"Good! another girl who knows her Shakespeare!"

"Is there another?" she asked with a light mockery. She rose to go. "Thank you a lot. I'll tell the girls."

"By the way, what are you doing next period?"

"Going to my room."

"Don't you have a class?"

"No, not today."

"How would you like to shoot some baskets for a little while?"

"Fine. I would like to." The Gym would be in use all afternoon with the interclass games. It was a good opportunity; so she took it.

That was how it happened that Bruce Wendell, coming into the Gym about twelve o'clock to get a book from his room, heard the sound of a basketball bouncing, and of leather-soled shoes sliding on the floor upstairs. After taking a drink of water in the

dressing room, he went up the rear flight of stairs to kick those kids off the floor. He had done it often. They weren't supposed to be on the floor with street shoes. But when he came to the wire-covered opening and could see who they were, he stopped.

Fay Thurston and Randall MacRae were shooting baskets with the carefree enjoyment of a couple of young boys. They seemed to be playing a game of "21," but MacRae was showing her how to arch her shots in better form, and how to sink them clean without using the backboard.

There was something in the way she looked at him, the way she took his advice, the way she watched him when he slipped in a graceful follow-up shot, something in her voice as she laughed, which told Wendell the truth. It was MacRae. What had been a vague suspicion in his mind was now confirmed.

He watched them for a few moments unobserved, feeling the vulture of despair eating his heart as the first realization of the complete ruin of his hopes dawned upon him. As long as her heart had been free there was always a flicker of hope that some day he might win her. Now even that flicker was gone. He went down the stairs quietly and with a slow tread. Every sound of the bouncing ball made him more despondent. They seemed so entirely happy together. Oh, well, it was always thus. He would continue to buck the line and someone else

would carry the ball through. Back in his room, he turned to work with a dogged persistence and tried to forget.

That afternoon the Sophs ran over the Senior team rough-shod: 30–12; and the following day took the tournament by sinking a basket in the last minute of play to win the thrilling game with the Juniors by a score of 22–20. The Seniors brought up the rear, losing to the Frosh by a narrow margin.

It was the day before Thanksgiving. After supper at the Dorm, MacRae stopped, as was still his custom, to chat with Nita. He was as yet unable to explain to himself the attraction which the girl held for him. He had given up trying to explain. He had even given up trying to break the spell. He simply answered the call in her eyes.

But on this particular evening he had felt in no mood to pause. He was tired and discouraged by the poor showing of the Seniors, and had a headache from a hard crack received in the afternoon's game. His face betrayed some of his feelings. As he went to pass the Dean's door, Nita came out suddenly and almost ran into him.

"Oh," she said, "it's you. What's the matter? You look awfully blue. Did your sweetie turn you down?"

He had no intention of stopping, but he could not be rude. Instead he was sarcastic. He could always be that.

"How did you guess it?" he said coldly.

"Well, that's all right, big boy. Cheer up! But say, no fooling, I've got something to tell you. Chic Conning just called me up from Chi and invited me in to her house for dinner tomorrow and for a little party at night. Ma Carwell has consented, not knowing the exact nature of said party. I've got "per" to stay in over Sunday. It's a house party, and Chic told me to bring someone in with me if I cared to; so I'm asking you to come in." In reality, she had told Chic that she had a keen boy friend she would like her to meet, but the little variation from the truth was naturally an important and necessary change.

MacRae was silent for a moment. He had intended to date Fay up for something, but, of course, he would probably see her at the Thanksgiving dinner anyhow. He could think of no excuse on the instant.

"Well?" she was asking impatiently.

"How long will I be expected to stick around?"

"Oh, if that's the way you feel about it, you don't need to come at all. We're not that hard up for males, you know."

"You're not? That's interesting. I thought you must be when you asked me."

"Listen to the boy rave! Don't try to slip out of it that way now. Do you want to come or don't you?" She looked dangerously pretty, even when she was peeved. Suddenly a fierce desire for a return to the life he had known swept over him.

That was what he needed, a good old whoopee party. Fay need never know.

"I'll be glad to come in, Nita. What time?"

"Oh, about five o'clock. All right?"

"Just right."

After getting the details of the address, and how to reach the place, he said "Good-night," and went to his room wondering what he had let himself in for. Fortunately, he had cashed a check the previous day. He had about forty dollars, but that might not be enough. He borrowed cash from several individuals to raise the amount to seventy-five.

When he entered Wendell's room, after knocking, he found him standing in a dim corner of the room. He had been before the bureau, but walked over to meet MacRae when he entered. The latter noticed a picture of Fay lying on the bureau. He had evidently just laid it down, as his confusion was manifest.

"Can you cash me a small check, Bruce? I'm going into Chi on last-minute notice, and I may need some extra cash."

"How much do you want?"

"All you can spare; and where's Craig? I may need some of his too."

Wendell's wallet contained a ten, a five, and three ones. He handed MacRae the ten and told him that Craig had gone home to Michigan.

He seemed more despondent than ever. It was

a weariness for him to speak. Defeat haunted his tone. MacRae wondered at it. He thought he would sit down and see if he could do anything about the matter.

"See here, Bruce boy," he said; "what's making you so down-hearted these days? You go around with a face like that library painting of 'Prometheus Bound.'"

He did not realize that every word he said was a handful of salt on an open wound. "Prometheus Bound!" That was it exactly. He was living with vulture at his heart, and MacRae was joking about it.

"Is it that bad, MacRae?" he asked, trying to smile. "I didn't know I was crying in such cowardly fashion. It's nothing great. I'll be over it soon, I guess. I have these moods at times when I wonder what is the meaning of life and get no answer. Did you ever feel that way?"

"I can't say that I have. Perhaps I'm just naturally optimistic; or, more probably, I haven't yet had to take the hard knocks you have had. They'll come though, I suppose. Life is an 'Argonne' and no one comes through without a scratch. Some get it worse than the rest. But Bruce, I'm sorry, man. I wish there was something I could do. I admire you a heap—" He stopped abruptly and rose. They were both moved with emotion. He took Wendell's hand and held it a moment in a powerful grip. They looked each other squarely in the eye.

There is something about the handshake of two men in such a moment that is as beautifully sacramental as a lover's kiss, although it is entirely different. It is far less brilliant, but it burns longer in the memory of each.

MacRae went across to his room with a strange warmth in his heart. After he left, Bruce Wendell sat down on the edge of his bed weakly and fumbled with his hands.

"Well, at least," he thought, "he's a fine chap. I'm glad of that. She'll be happy with him. I'm glad."

The Thanksgiving dinner at the Dorm was a real feast for those who remained, and there were many, because of the distances from which most of the students came. It almost seemed as if they saved on meals all year to lavish their abundance at this holiday festival.

What made it particularly enjoyable to MacRae was the fact that he was permitted to sit next to Fay. That was more than he had hoped for. He thought he might get at the same table, but to be able to pass dishes to her; to look into her eyes as he passed them, and forget that the table was watching him—it was glorious. He had had few formal dates, but often chance meetings, and already there was a spirit of comradeship in their conversation. They had many tastes in common. They talked of these things; they talked of their different experiences, of anything toward which the weather

vane of conversation turned, and found that in their silences there was no embarrassment; only continued fellowship and understanding. They did not need to keep talking to be comfortable. They were at ease. But already beneath the pleasantness of their communion each had felt the slow formation of a coral-reef barrier upon which eventually their happy friendship would be wrecked. They felt the subtle menace vaguely, and steered clear of the danger spot.

MacRae was half sorry that he had agreed to go into Chicago that afternoon. But after he was ushered into the richly appointed Evanston home and met some of the young people, he felt he was in for a good time.

Nita introduced him with an air of proprietorship which irked him a little, but she was so charming about it that he secretly forgave her. There were just six couples. All the men were university undergrads except one, who had recently graduated and entered business, and felt a little superior. The girls were a nondescript assortment, but all attractive, clever, and expensively gowned.

After a delicious supper, served on silver, and presided over by the matronly woman of fashion, Mrs. Conning, they set out on the merry-go-round. They first took in a show at the Lincoln. From there they went to a dance at one of the university clubs. A light lunch at one o'clock in a luxuriant oriental café pepped them up for a fresh dance on

their return home. Mrs. Conning was the kind of mother who believed in letting the younger generation run their own affairs without parental restraint, and so it was three o'clock before the dim corners and soft divans of the two large front rooms yielded up their cuddling couples. The girls went upstairs first. The men remained for a smoke before retiring.

MacRae had done a lot of things he had not intended doing. It had been that last dance with Nita's supple, clinging body in his arms, her cheek soft against his, her thin red lips, unspoiled by rouge, because they did not need it, whispering, her curly black hair touching his lips at times, and sweetly scented. Maybe this wasn't love, but it was sweet. It was life. Why not make the most of it?

As the pulsing syncopation stopped he had swung her into a near-by davenport behind several trailing ferns and warm-light floor lamps. She was breathlessly happy, and her delight filled him with an answering passion. Just what he was saying he could not remember. The faint fragrance of her perfume was like wine in his blood. He felt her eyes drop to his lips, his dropped to hers, and then he was kissing her. When their eyes met again, he saw in hers the light of ecstasy.

"Ran," she asked, with a sudden naïve solemnity that was quite new to her, fingering his hand that was warm on her white shoulder, "what does a kiss mean to you?"

"You'll have to give me time on that. Let's see, I've never had the question put to me in just that form before. I've had them ask me straight out to marry them, but—"

"Well, of all the idiotic, high-hat dunces!"

"Are you going to let me finish? I think I'll answer you in the words of Cyrano de Bergerac. I've listened to that immortal balcony scene six times and read it so often that I can repeat most of the lines. To answer your question—what is a kiss?" He became comically dramatic. " 'A kiss! when all is said, what is a kiss? An oath of allegiance taken in closer proximity, a promise more precise, a seal on a confession, a rose-red dot upon the letter "i" in loving—' Ah, that is it! I knew I would come to it at last. 'A rose-red dot upon the letter "i" in loving'—how do you like that?" he asked with a grin.

"And what about the things you said before that? Do you believe them too?" she said softly.

He was surprised at her almost innocent earnestness. She must surely be joking. He took it so anyhow, and replied,

"Of course not. No one believes that now. That is old world romanticism. It is what follows it that we believe. Listen! 'It is a secret that elects the mouth for ear; an instant of eternity murmuring like a bee; balmy communion with the flavor of flowers; a fashion of inhaling each other's heart, and of tasting, on the brink of the lips, each other's

soul!'" He finished with a mock flourish and expected her to laugh at his clever satire. But she did not laugh. If her eyes said anything she seemed about to cry.

Just then the humorist of the group startled them with a crazy Indian war whoop which caused the party to disentangle itself.

"Fisk tires," he said wearily, and stood up yawning. "Come on, chillun, ah craves a downy pillow."

Someone called out, "What's the matter with the one you have?"

He countered with, "She's too skinny," and was promptly slapped by his fair companion.

MacRae was glad to rise. He gave his hand to Nita. She took it and pulled slowly to her feet, stretched lazily like a lithe young cat, and covered a dainty half-yawn with a bit of trailing rainbow mist she held in her hand.

They said good-night quite simply.

MacRae went to bed cursing himself for a fool.

Nita sat before the glass at the dresser upstairs and studied her eyes. The two girls sharing her room were already in bed and asleep. She sat with her legs crossed gracefully, the arched left foot swinging idly. Mechanically she tapped her knee with a heavy comb from the dresser set. After a time she turned out the lights and slipped into bed with a little sigh.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

As Bruce Wendell sat in the left section of Upper Chapel he came to the conclusion, after some thought, that, if you come in early to a concert with a girl who is in love with someone else, there is only one thing to do—to sit and watch the other couples straggle in; to sit and study the various actions and wonder what is taking place in the soul of each. They came in slowly, two by two, took programs from the half-formal figures at the door, and looked around for seats. Some of them came in the dark tower entrance. He wondered if it was romance that led them to climb the winding stairs. Most of them were just on a date; that, and nothing more. Many of them would sit a week hence with other companions. He began to wonder why he had asked Fay for this date when it was breaking his heart to sit next to her. But when she suddenly addressed him, he realized that it was because the pain was more bearable beside her.

"Bruce," she said, speaking to the back of his head as he stared across the wide hall, "do you know that you haven't spoken to me once since we sat down? I've read this program through three times."

"I was wondering how long you would be at it."

"Oh, you didn't want to disturb me, eh?" she asked with a little chuckle. "Well, I'm through now. You may commence."

"What shall I say?"

"In other words, you want me to carry on a conversation with myself. Bruce, you have the drollest humor at times."

"Does it amuse you?"

"No, it worries me. You are so constantly morose lately. Why are you that way?"

"I shouldn't think you would enjoy rubbing it in, Fay, by asking that sort of question."

"But, Bruce, I'm not. You don't know how I long to have you as a friend, the real friend you used to be. Why is it we can't be friends? Why is it that we cannot sit happily together as we used to do?"

His voice was made for melancholy. It was intense as he said, without looking at her, "Because I love you, and because you cannot love me. I must continue to love. That is the barrier between us. You must take it down. I cannot. Either you must surrender, or we must go on like this, neither enemies nor friends." He shrugged his shoulders.

Two girls came in and sat next to them, and Fay was glad to change the topic which had only embarrassed her.

"They have a good club this year," she ventured. "Did you hear them sing over WLS last week?"

"No," he answered half-heartedly. "Did you?"

"No; I missed it too. I'm awfully anxious to hear them. I love men's voices."

"Especially one." And with that he was back on the old subject.

"Don't, Bruce. You are becoming an awfully poor sport. You don't want us to be enemies, do you?"

"I'm wondering if it could be any harder than being just friends."

"Let's not try it. I know it would be for me."

"Why do you care to keep me as a friend?"

"Because I like you; I like you better than you think."

I wish somehow I could get you to use another four-letter word which some fools might call a synonym for 'like'; but which I call, in this case, the strongest sort of antonym, as strong for me as the difference between light and darkness, between hope and despair."

Fay was conscious that they were being noticed by the people around them. He did not seem to be. They wondered what was up between Fay Thurston and Bruce Wendell. They did not look happy.

Then the Men's Glee Club entered in single file from a door behind the platform, and the audience accompanied their entry with a steady clapping. They remained standing while the director took his place. He was a short, handsome, silver-haired man in full dress, with a virile force in his leader-

ship, and a graceful baton. He tapped it twice on his stand. There was a second of absolute silence. Then came softly rippling music which wafted you as in a gondola past happy serenaders singing the "Venetian Love Song." Most of the program numbers were in groups of twos, separated by special solo or duet work. This first song was followed by a piece that MacRae had come to love—"In Absence." He would sing it softly to himself in his room. The harmony was passionately sweet; the words were lyrically beautiful. He sang it now standing among the thirty other singers and looked down on his right where Fay sat with Wendell. He sang it dreamily.

"Kiss her gently, winds,
Gently that she may not miss
Any sweet accustomed bliss,
Any sweet accustomed bliss.
On her lips, her eyes, her face,
Till I come to take your place;
On her lips, her eyes, on her eyes, her face,
Till I come to take your place,
Oh, kiss her gently, winds."

Fay had heard it sung before in former years. Somehow, this year, it thrilled her with a new significance. She caught MacRae's eyes upon her, and saw his lips move to the sweet words. He did not have a trained solo voice, but it harmonized well, even beautifully, with others.

When the Club pianist had given a perfect rendition of one of Chopin's Nocturnes, the Club sang a delightful little group composed of the "Dance of the Gnomes" and "The Goblins'll Get You if You Don't Watch Out."

Then Fay trembled inwardly. She had waited for the next number, a trumpet solo—"Even Bravest Heart May Swell" by Gounod—played by Randall MacRae. She felt her own heart swell; tried to control its beating with self-ridicule, but did not succeed. He stood, graceful in repose, as the introductory bars were struck on the piano. Then swiftly the silver trumpet was lifted, and Fay knew in that moment that she loved him and always would. Pathetically she sat there admitting she could not help herself. The Chapel was filled with challenging sound. It was still MacRae's peculiar silver, but it was a fierce alloy, beautiful and strong. It surged and rose and lifted to heroic things. Only Wendell stayed behind in his seat and clapped lifelessly when it was over. The rest came back to earth and insisted on more. The encore was a singing lyric in which for a moment the silver turned to gold.

The Club went on to demonstrate its versatility, and the genius of its talented director, through a group of negro spirituals, an Indian love song played on a saw, a mighty selection from one of Mendelssohn's oratorios, "Thanks Be to God," in which the rush of that tremendous harmony of

"The waters gather; they rush along!" makes the emotional grip their seats. Then Colburn and Conrad sang the audience into fits of laughter.

But the most impressive number on the program was one quite new to the listeners. On the platform voices softly sang, "In Heavenly Love Abiding," while from somewhere high in the air came the muffled music of "Abide with Me," interweaving harmoniously and simultaneously with the voices. It was a perfect fugue of the most unusual sort. The mysterious beauty was later discovered to have been caused by MacRae playing "Abide with Me," up in the old Latin room, a door of which opened on the Chapel fire-escape, that had always been an eyesore. He remained unseen throughout, and the trumpet voice was as elusive and enchanting as a heavenly tongue.

Fay and Wendell went out in silence. Down at the Greek's afterwards, just as they were about to leave, they saw MacRae and Nita walk in together laughing. Bruce turned to Fay and asked her gravely, with a nod of his head across the room,

"What do you think of this chap, MacRae?"

"Why do you ask?"

"I was just wondering if you had been able to dope him out yet."

"I haven't tried particularly. Just what do you mean?"

"Well, I can't imagine what he is here for. He is not the type that picks Wharton after four years

at Princeton. There's something funny about him. He could have easily finished there, even if he were low on funds, which he isn't, if you've noticed how he spends it."

"What do you mean to imply?"

"Nothing perhaps. Much maybe. He visits Chi pretty often. He'll bear watching. You've been out with him. How does he treat you?"

"He is the finest gentleman I have ever known."

"That's what I felt. I'm afraid he is too smooth. Why is he rushing your roommate?"

"He isn't. She's doing the rushing."

"He's a willing victim then, isn't he?"

Fay was becoming indignant.

"Let's go," she said quickly. "I don't see what business it is of ours to pry into his affairs."

Bruce paid the check and held the door for her. When they neared the campus, after a walk of forced conversation on nothing in particular, he asked her the question she had been expecting.

"Will you go with me to the Open Meeting?"

Fay knew what that meant. Once each semester the Literary Societies gathered in Upper Chapel for a union program. The chairman of the evening was invariably the president of one or other of the men's societies. They alternated in this function. There was a popular election at the beginning of the meeting, but it was a mere formality. It was known ahead of time who would take the chair. The chairman always went in on a white ballot.

This semester, Wendell, as president of the Excelsior Society, would be chosen. It was their turn to be represented. He would take the chair and then the other interesting formality would follow the tap of his gavel. They would elect a secretary from one of the girls' societies to sit beside him on the platform. It was nearly always the girl whom the chairman brought to the meeting. Fay had visions of sitting up there before the whole school with Wendell. She knew it would be torture for her.

He noticed her long hesitation.

"I know how you feel," he said, "but can't you do it this once? They all think we're steady, and they may elect you anyhow if I come in alone, thinking I'm just trying to pull a fast one on them, or something."

"All right, Bruce," she said at last.

And so, when MacRae asked her for a date two days before the meeting, she had to say "Sorry." He did not know how deeply she meant it.

Nor could he tell as he watched her sitting on the platform that Friday night with Wendell that she was in misery. He sat with Jean Culver. Nita had accepted another date also. He enjoyed the program thoroughly, as well as the spirited conversation with Jean between numbers and on the way home. Outside, a cold winter rain drove in windy sheets against the high windows. You could hear it beat angrily once in a while during a pause in a reading, or as one of the debaters looked at his notes

for the next point. Its cold wetness made you feel more warmly comfortable.

Fay sat with apparent self-possession. She seemed quite at ease. Inwardly there was riot. The intolerable nature of her position suddenly became apparent to her as she faced the large audience. She knew that this must be her last date with Bruce Wendell. It was impossible to go on thus. MacRae was watching her: she must keep cool; and to his eyes she did. He saw her in a half vision, a queen on a raised dais beside the distinguished king. They made a fine couple.

When the torture was over, Fay told Wendell as they walked over to the Dorm in the pouring rain that she could not go out with him any more. He thanked her on the steps and turned back through the cold drip to his room. Calmly he took her picture from the bureau, folded it, and placed it in a drawer, out of sight. It had always been his custom to read a small portion of Scripture before retiring. This night he omitted it and rolled into bed to toss through long hours to the sound of the rain and of Craig's steady breathing in the darkness.

At two o'clock he jumped out of bed, threw on a bathrobe, and, going to his desk, wrote steadily until the first faint gray of dawn. Then he tumbled back into bed and slept until noon.

One more event of importance to MacRae took place that week before the school closed for the Christmas holidays. But this was in the New

Chapel during one morning's chapel exercise. Fay sat near the front with the Senior girls, MacRae on the other side with the Senior boys, Wendell behind him, Nita farther behind, and to the left with the Sophomore girls.

The address was given by a missionary from Africa. But such a missionary! He had a deep resonant voice as vibrant as a bass viol. His body was packed with energy and strength. The clothes he wore could not conceal that fact. His face told you unmistakably that he had found somewhere, not the fountain of *youth*, but the fountain of *joy*. The hard masculine jaw was modified by a continual smile that revealed his white teeth. Here was a man, a real man.

In his speech there was apostolic power. You felt that here was one who would gladly die for Christ. He had surrendered everything that selfish men hold most dear, and had found everything that unselfish men know to be far dearer. He could recount an incident with such descriptive vividness that you walked in the jungle; you stood on a river bank and watched a woman being baptized in the sluggish waters, while on the opposite bank crouched the woman's husband with a leveled rifle, in his rage waiting to kill her and the missionary. Not something, but Someone, held that rifle and the hand that raised it, in an unseen grip. The trigger would not pull. The barrel was gradually lowered. The black figure slunk away. The woman emerged

from the waters with a new joy in her wet face.

In a short half hour you saw scene after scene, painted in tragic but beautiful colors on the quickened imagination. The man made you feel terribly small, utterly selfish, puny, and mean. The very way he uttered the name of the "Lord Jesus," told intensely of the unquenchable love his heart held for Him. This man knew no suffering too hard, no sacrifice too difficult, no burden too heavy to endure for the sake of his Lord. This was primitive Christianity flaming in a twentieth century life with all of its original force undiminished.

Nita listened, because everyone had to listen to that compelling personality. She wondered at the fanatical bigotry that could drive fine men of that type to throw their lives away in the jungle among a mess of evil-smelling blacks, still too near the beast to be worth a moment's thought. She would continue to wonder. There is only one explanation for a life like that. She did not yet know what it was.

Wendell listened with an apathy which had gradually grown upon him in recent days, an apathy that was the first stage of cynicism. He did not know that.

MacRae listened to something he had never heard before. He eagerly followed each word of the speaker. Never had he known a man who impressed him as being so entirely unselfish, and never had he seen a man who appeared to be so genuinely

happy. He was deeply impressed. After all, there was something in Christianity that *made* men, heroically *fine men.* That man had something MacRae lacked and wanted. He would need to see him and have a talk with him.

But going out with the student body he overheard someone say: "Boy, he has some speaking voice, hasn't he?" It was as if someone had knocked from his hand an exquisite vase of roses he had just received. The spell of the matchless spirit of the man lay shattered and crushed. He did not bother to pick up the fragments. It was useless. Instead he pulled a joke on the fellow going down the stairs in front of him.

Fay listened to that address with a compassion in her heart, something strained at her throat, and a tear dimming each eye. What a man! She saw through the blur, in place of the missionary, a straight young form holding a trumpet to his lips. In reality he sat not many seats away. She prayed:

"Oh, Lord, if it be Thy will, change him. Lift him out of his selfish little circle, and help him to find the glory of the Cross. Give him a love for the souls of men. Thou alone canst do the work. Convict him now. Use this message to bring him to Thee."

A simple cry it was. Who knows how many women's prayers throng the crowded highways to the throne of the Everlasting Mercy, and who knows the infinite wisdom that seems to delay their answer?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THERE are places even more lonely than an uninhabited desert. One such is a college campus during vacation. On the desert sand, or in the heavy forest, you may walk for miles alone with the stars and the whispering wind. But when you walk alone on a deserted campus, you walk amid phantoms that appear and disappear and leave you more terribly alone. You walk through halls doubly silent, through chapels more completely empty, across paths tragically barren save for an occasional solitary figure whose lonely appearance but confirms your own feeling.

Wendell had stayed behind in his gymnasium room when the heavily baggaged crowd decamped on train after train. For four years he had watched them go thus and he had stayed behind. For much longer than that he had been without the family reunion at Christmas. He had almost forgotten the meaning of home. It was a letter once in a while which you read and answered. That was all.

But for the last three years, Christmas vacation had meant happiness with Fay. This Christmas meant absolute loneliness. She too had remained in Wharton those other years. This winter she had decided to make the long trip West. Her mother

was very sick. Wendell had watched MacRae help her on the train and follow her up the steps. The "Continental Limited" did not stop at Wharton. She had to go to Chicago to get it.

MacRae went in with her, while secretly Nita stormed, and took the train for New York in a sulk, with a party of girls. He had packed his grips too, intending to spend the vacation in the city.

Before she left, Fay gave him a picture which he had asked for repeatedly. It was a lovely study: not an ordinary picture, flattering and different. This was her natural self: her eyes, her smile, her hair. It was Fay. When he put it on his hotel desk after she was gone, he sat and looked at it steadily for half an hour. Mentally he was telling her the things he longed to tell her. He was kissing her full, sweet lips. Why was it, he wondered, that he made no time with this girl? If she had been the usual type, he knew he would have kissed her long ago. Somehow this girl had a quiet reserve beneath her open friendliness, which made him proceed with caution. It was hard on him. He wasn't used to it.

The other place that rivals a deserted campus for loneliness is a strange and crowded city. MacRae walked the streets that were black streams, with eddies along the store-window banks, whirlpools at the crossings, and sluggish motion everywhere. He drifted with the current and pushed across it alternately, swearing under his breath. He hated to walk in such a mill race.

Afternoons and evenings were spent in the various theaters, making up for the long isolation at Wharton. After the theaters, the night clubs. It was as if a man had gone without water for days and was suddenly handed a flask from which he drank to excess.

He tried staying in his room one night to read a book. It was the night before Christmas Eve. The oppressive silence of the place, its monotonous sameness, its dull, unhomelike polish, its hotel air, above all, its loneliness, made him sick. He had to go out. On the street, as he passed a dark doorway, a woman made her crude advances to him. It was the first time this had ever happened to him in Chicago. That was one thing which nauseated him, especially since his love for Fay had become the supreme thing in his life. He looked at her with disgust. But his feeling changed to pity as something in her eyes belied the wantonness of her painted face and lips. He passed her without a word, but he could not get the face from his mind —the deep, dark-rimmed eyes, the porcelain cheeks, the too red lips. She continued in wait for her foolish prey.

When he returned to the hotel at midnight, he entered the elevator behind two well-dressed couples. They got out at his floor and walked ahead of him down the corridor to the door of the suite next to his own. He watched them with interest, knowing that only one of the young men had that

suite. He had taken it the day after MacRae took his. He decided that he was not to get much sleep that night. There would be whoopee.

And he was right. The party next door began with bridge but did not end there. A door connected his room with their suite. Of course it was locked, but he could hear through it too well for his own comfort. By one o'clock the liquor was circulating freely, as he could tell from the increasing loudness of their voices and the emptiness of their laughter.

He retired and tried to sleep, but was awakened frequently by the subdued and muffled laughter, the drunken wise-cracks, the mumbled mush-words. At length he awoke suddenly from a temporary drowse to hear a voice, a humorous drunken voice, ask in excited, strident tones,

"What time is it?"

The reply was more sober, and, comparing it with his watch, found it to be correct. It said, "Five after four."

"I don't like that," said the first, in the comic seriousness that only the drunk can affect. "That's too bad."

A girl's silly giggle followed his sally.

"Well, I told you when it was two o'clock it was time to go. How will you get them in now?"

There was the sound of the party coming to life gradually. The first speaker was evidently the visitor and had brought in the two girls, and it was

his duty to get them home. He continued to make his silly, oratorical remarks:

"Miss Forest, tall, handsome, and rich was also among those present."

He could not hear the girls' voices, only their laughter. It was not unpleasant, but neither was it the laughter of happiness. After a time it moved out to the hall; and from the sounds, it seemed that their escort would be a liability on the way home instead of an asset. He listened to their voices fade down the hallway, listened to the occupant of the suite return to his empty bed, and then lay for some time haunted by the face he had seen in the street. After all, he thought, what was the difference between her and these supposedly respectable women? One sold herself for money. That was her disgrace. The others gave themselves away. Perhaps there was virtue in that!

He wondered how much of this sort of thing had gone on in the very room he occupied. Then he turned over and slept until eleven o'clock.

He arose tired and lifeless. Inactivity did not agree with him. The inertia already began to pall. In a cheaper hotel not far away, three of his classmates were just taking a shower and falling into bed after a night of tussle with dirty Christmas mail sacks in the main terminal post office. He washed and dressed leisurely and ate his breakfast at lunch time.

He started a letter to Fay but tore it up after

he had written two pages and began anew. He longed for her with an unutterable longing. He never imagined he could miss a voice, a face, a figure so much. It was as if he had lost himself.

Christmas Eve brought poignant memories of home. Many relatives would be gathered there now and would be wondering what he was doing. He had written to many of them, sent cards and gifts to many of them, but to his father—never. The old boy would be keeping Christmas in his own prosaic fashion. So he thought.

But actually, in the Forest Hills home, Mr. MacRae sat before a roaring open fire in a Christmas living room, with a little grandnephew on his knee. He was telling him stories while the young people decorated the large tree, and the older people played bridge in the parlor. He was watching the flames and forming those images that log-flames will suggest to the most prosaic mind at times. He was utterly miserable. Every day made him more conscious of his deep love for Randall, more sure that he had really nothing else to live for. And every day made him more determined not to show it, not to weaken and take the first step back to reconciliation. But to the flames he talked on, about Robert the Bruce, for the wee four-year-old head of curls drowsed on his shoulder as he talked dreamily. He wondered where Ranny was tonight. Poor Ranny, poor boy. He was a proud rascal, that one!

But the proud rascal was not so proud that night.

With very little persuasion he would have called up the distant home and set out on the next train for New York. He went to bed and slept off the emotion. In the morning, although it was Christmas Day, the callous determination had returned.

The week between Christmas and New Year's Eve is always brief. When it had passed in the monotonous flight of attempted escape from monotony, MacRae mingled with the teeming throngs that gathered in every conceivable place except home, in order to bring in the New Year with the sound of riot and the spirit of mirth.

The whole thing was as bright and empty as a Christmas bauble, and like the bauble it would soon shiver into a thousand pieces and be forgotten. He went to a midnight revue. When the bells rang and the noise rose over the city, the leg show took time out to give the packed assembly an opportunity to boil off their effervescence in long and continuous racket. Several were gaily drunk, and entertained spontaneously and freely until they were dragged out, wildly protesting.

MacRae himself had brought a flask of the stuff in his hip pocket. He intended to use it. He wanted to get drunk. Loneliness cried for forgetfulness. But something prevented him. He returned at three o'clock in the morning of the first day of January to pour the strong smelling stuff down his wash basin. He could not understand why he did it.

Could it have been because, just about that time, two thousand miles away, in mild California, a young girl was kneeling with her father and her two younger brothers at the bedside of her mother in a modest home, bringing in the New Year, as was their custom, with praise for past blessings and prayer for future guidance? Her voice was sweet with supplication. She remembered the friends who would be away from home at this glad season. She asked God to preserve them from evil and from danger.

Bruce Wendell sat until past midnight in his dreary room, too large and too empty. He read poem after poem written by Rupert Brooke, and forgot the time until the village bells told him that the year was gone. He had been given the thin volume of the young poet's works as a Christmas gift by a friend who knew of his love for literature. Perhaps if the friend had known the effect it would have on Wendell he would not have sent that particular volume.

To Bruce, already miserably despondent, the thrillingly beautiful, but bitterly pessimistic, lines came as a narcotic that drifted him off to a deeper despondency and gloom, which ended in waking nightmares of horrid reality. There is a pain in awful doubt when, for the first time, one considers seriously the possibility of an empty throne in the heavens. Brooke's lines on "Failure" awakened that Doubt which had been slumbering beside

the lovely form of Faith in his heart. Suddenly the grotesque shape, dark and sinister, rose in madness and choked the fair throat with relentless hands. These were the lines he read and re-read by the dim light, resting his eyes at times upon the wall with a blank stare that looked through its gray to emptiness:

"Because God put His adamantine fate
Between my sullen heart and its desire,
I swore that I would burst the Iron Gate,
Rise up, and curse Him on His throne of fire.
Earth shuddered at my crown of blasphemy,
But Love was as a flame about my feet;
Proud up the Golden Stair I strode; and beat
Thrice on the Gate, and entered with a cry—

All the great courts were quiet in the sun,
And full of vacant echoes: moss had grown
Over the glassy pavement, and begun
To creep within the dusty council-halls.
An idle wind blew round an empty throne
And stirred the heavy curtains on the walls."

So, another young man had had this same experience. Fascinated, he read on. There is a subtle union when living mood meets written mood, and from that union comes an hour of unforgetable delight. When that delight is sadness, how exquisite is the pain of it! Here, thought Wendell, was another unfulfilled life: this one beautiful in form as a Greek god, gifted beyond the dreams of many youths, a life that flamed awhile and then

went down "rose-crowned into the darkness,"—his darkness, his created gloom which had cast a blighting shadow over his keenest moments and turned their gold to purple.

He read, as a man drinks who loves the taste of wine, slowly, sip by sip, rolling it gently on his palate as if a little fearful that its sweetness would be turned to bitter vinegar after the swallow. Each poem was a crystal goblet, lovely as the changing lights in the wine it held. Sometimes a single phrase would linger long upon his tongue. The beauty of it overpowered him, and therein lay the menace. Glass after glass he drank, until at length he came to one that met his most piercing need. There come these moments in our reading when we can lay our finger on a passage and say, "That belongs to me. That is part of me." So he read these lines and so he lingered over them:

"Now that we have done our best and worst, and parted,
I would fill my mind with thoughts that will not rend.
(O heart, I do not dare go empty-hearted)
I'll think of Love in books, Love without end;
Women with child, content; and old men sleeping;
And wet strong ploughlands, scarred for certain grain;
And babes that weep, and so forget their weeping;
And the young heavens, forgetful after rain;
And evening hush, broken by homing wings;
And Song's nobility, and Wisdom holy,
That live, we dead. I would think of a thousand things,
Lovely and durable, and taste them slowly;
One after one, like tasting a sweet food.
I have need to busy my heart with quietude."

He memorized the melancholy lines and turned out the lights just about the time MacRae was returning to his hotel room in Chicago. Unwittingly he had begun to look upon the world, and his experience in it, through the beautiful but somber color of Rupert Brooke's sparkling wine. His mirth changed to mockery; his despondency became despair; his criticism stooped to cynicism; he began to rage inwardly against the fate of failure which had been his lot so far, and all his brightest memories and most cherished hopes ended in the inevitable darkness.

From that time he gave up reading his Bible; he neglected all his accustomed habits of prayer; remained away from all the religious meetings of the school except chapel, which was compulsory. Instead of taking the Divine Hand of compassion and strength, he followed a blind guide, out of the partial light, into a realm where satyrs laugh, and beauty is turned to ugliness, and youth to slobbering age, and love to kindliness, and nothing good remains.

It seems impossible to believe that a mind in that morbid and defeated state can continue to cherish its existence. And yet, curiously enough, often with a more fierce hold, a more tenacious grip, it clings in the sun whose warmth it feels but cannot see, and continues to live with more passionate desire because it must all too soon end in the cool tomb.

Fay told her mother all her heart when she was

at home; told her of the love she could not crush, try as she would; and of the fear she had that it could only bring her misery and not happiness. Sitting on her mother's bedside, she talked and talked as only a daughter can to a loving mother. All the unbreathed desires were poured out, all the perplexing problems. They lay scattered about like pieces from a crazy puzzle. Slowly, and with gentle fingers, her mother picked them up and showed her the pattern in them all. When she had finished, they read together in the former mystery the one word—faith.

"That is your name, Fay. Can you not trust Him to bring you to His perfect happiness in due time? He gave me Dad. What could I do without him? You see that love must be based on something deeper than mere personal attraction. Dad is more tender to me than the best nurse. Look at me, dear. What could I do were it not for the dear Lord's sustaining grace?" She held out one of her hands. The wrist was swollen and stiff, the fingers puffed with the constant torture of arthritis. Fay took the hand, her eyes blinded by tears.

"Oh, Mother, I will after this; I'll trust Him. It is the only way. Some day He'll make it plain to me. I do wish He would heal you, Mumsie. I hate to think of your suffering all the time like this."

"I have besought Him often, honey, just as Paul did, and He has given me the same answer. It is

marvelous what joy it brings. 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Do you know, Fay, I don't believe we've ever sounded the full meaning of the ministry of suffering. It has a purpose in this age. It is fitting us for something. The Cross tells me that God's heart has known it, that He still knows it as men reject His love, and doubt His wisdom. I'm sure you won't, will you, darling?"

"No, Mother. I don't think I ever could after seeing you."

"That's my brave girl. Now go down and play me something sweet and low. Play me 'Some Day the Silver Cord Will Break.' I love your interpretation of that, dear. It is almost unbearably beautiful, only it makes me rather cowardly. I sometimes wish I might go while you are playing it."

Fay kissed the cheek, still rosy, but thin with suffering, and went down the stairs crying softly. She sat for a moment at the piano before she could put down the handkerchief. Then up to the bedroom stole the music as if on wings of faith. Sweet it was as a remembered dream, the clear duet melting into the modulated harmony.

> "Some day the silver cord will break
> And I no more as now shall sing—"

As she played she heard her mother's glad voice singing in the upper room——

"But, oh, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King!"

Fay returned to Wharton with eyes washed clean by tears, with a deeper sincerity in their hazel, and a happy trust on her expressive face.

She learned that her roommate had spent the vacation evenings in a round of parties. During the afternoons she had dragged her mother to shop after shop, and returned to Wharton with two suitcases full of charming new dresses, sweaters, shoes, scarfs, stockings. She dumped the stuff out on her bed and began to hang it up in a closet already too full. She alone of the four whose lives had become so intricately intertwined had done no serious thinking during the fleeting days.

Fay listened to her light chatter and felt sorry for her. Some day life would not consist of parties, and clothes, and dates. What would she have in that day to live by? Poor kid. She sat down to write her Mother and Dad a letter telling of her safe arrival. She was tired after the long journey, but that did not prevent her from getting off the important message.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The next three weeks were completely full. It is hard to get back to regular schedules after two weeks of leisure, but preparation had to be made for the midyear exams. MacRae was astonished to find how well he had been doing his work. He had been intensely interested in Dr. Stone's class. Even if he had not been equally interested in modern British poetry under Dr. Down, he would have had to work, because of Fay's presence in the class. That was one point in favor of coeducation. He had always despised it as a system, but now he began to see that it had its advantages. It had its inspirational value as well as its dangerous romantic drawbacks. At any rate, he felt he had never been so well prepared for examinations, and—a new experience for him—he was eager for the test.

His retirement into the student ranks was really a step into the spotlight of school fame. A good coach is popular, but not as a good player is popular. His game at forward with Lennox, the captain, made one of the smoothest combinations ever seen on a Wharton floor. The rapidity and accuracy of their passwork was almost uncanny. Each could break fast, and knew when to break. The playing of the one supplemented that of the other.

Of the two MacRae was the smoother, but not so brilliant, not quite so spectacularly fast.

For the first time in his life MacRae took a real interest in the game. Heretofore he had played because he was needed; because he was built for it; not because he loved the game. Here at Wharton, where it was the major sport, it aroused an almost hysterical enthusiasm. For every game the Gym would be packed; sometimes a few daredevils even perched on the high steel girders. Something about the Midwestern game suited MacRae's style.

A dash, a whirlwind passing attack matched with a strong defence, began to thrill him as it did the spectators. He now came to practice with a will, and often remained a short while after the others had gone to perfect a point in his technique. It was a peculiarity of his character to work that way. It was one reason for his success in certain fields. He also contributed to the team's knowledge some valuable Eastern plays.

But what made his playing particularly impressive was his sportsmanship. In this respect he seemed to have caught the Wharton spirit. At university, the more you could get away with, behind the referee's back, the better you were. Here the object was to beat a good team by being just a little faster. Everyone noticed also how repeatedly he would feed Lennox when he might have taken a hasty shot himself. The captain was high-point man, but if you had taken the average of the number

of shots that netted baskets you would find that MacRae should have stood there.

One morning, after the third-period bell had rung, MacRae walked out of the Library with Fay. He took several of the books from her too full arm. As they passed the Bookstore, he turned and said,

"Fay, may I take you to the Washington Banquet?"

He was surprised at her answer. She seemed troubled. After a moment she said,

"Could I give you my answer later?"

Immediately his Scotch pride was touched to the quick. This was the old gag. She was holding him off till Bruce got in his bid. He did not like that. He did not think she would do such a thing.

He spoke a little harshly.

"Personally, I think you know me well enough by now to give me an answer at once. Why do you need time to think it over?"

"I didn't say that was the reason for waiting. But if you want to take my answer now, it will have to be 'no.' If you care to wait, it may be different." She did not speak as one who trifled. He was convinced that she was unusually serious.

By this time they had reached the main stairs. He had fully intended to say, "I'll take it now;" but something made him grunt,

"All right."

He returned her books as she entered the girls'

rest room, and passed on to the Gym in deep reflection. He loved this girl, loved her terribly, and it was time to wonder how he stood. Things did not look so good.

The Wharton–North Central game was always a classic. This year it was one of those contests which absolutely shatter the nerves of a crowd of people and leave them weaker than if they had played themselves. From the first tip-off the play was as intense and dramatic as the last five minutes of the usual close game. A maroon basket would be followed by a frenzied yelling in their gallery. An orange and blue swisher would rock the Gymnasium with thunder. A ball balancing for a second on either basket's rim was a more momentous instant at the time than an epoch-making decision at a disarmament conference. In the center of this roaring bowl ten men fought for every point desperately. The whistle's screech could hardly be heard in the chaos of sound. When a foul was called, the man would take his place on the free throw line, and the din would end temporarily in a long shshshsh and a silence more nerve racking to the player than the uproar.

Neither team at any time had a lead of more than four points, and never that for long. When the final gun split the pandemonium with a sudden crack, the score board read 30–30. All the players lay down, overcome with fatigue. The blood

raced in their temples, pounded at their ears, left their hearts with violent, almost audible jerks, their breath came with difficulty.

Up in the balcony bleachers Nita and Fay sat together. They commented on nearly everyone's playing except MacRae's. He was no longer a subject of conversation between them. Each understood the other and scrupulously avoided that topic. He sat up with his legs outstretched and his arms supporting him. The triplex muscles above his elbows flexed beautifully. As they rose for the overtime period it was easy to see that every man was terribly worn, completely exhausted.

But in the first half-minute of that five-minute stretch Lennox leaped twice into the air to snatch the tip-off and dribble past his guard for two baskets. A third he took in the same way from center, then shot a fast loop pass straight to MacRae, who sent it swishing through the basket.

After that they played merely to keep the ball out of dangerous territory and the gun went off again to give the decision to the team that could still sprint when the last ounce of energy seemed gone.

Victory has always been the occasion for men's wildest outbursts of joy. The more difficult the contest the greater the victory. A wholesome form of insanity is displayed on such occasions. It is a great feeling to come home wet, drooping, still shaking nervously, and ridiculously hoarse. Fay

was like that as she descended the stairs, slow step after slow step, with the crowd throttled at the too narrow exit. As she reached the main floor she saw Bruce talking to several fellows outside his door. She waited until he drifted off and then approached him.

"Bruce."

He scarcely turned to answer her.

"Hello," he said.

"Could I speak to you a minute?"

This was a ray of brilliant light to a man sitting long in dungeon blackness. Its sharpness pained his slow eyes. He turned dumbly. Could it be possible she would give him another chance?

"I'll walk over to the Dorm with you."

Outside a light hail had turned to wet sleet that froze as it struck the ground. Sidewalks were ice-coated to the depth of half an inch. He took her arm and felt the old thrill run through him. It was a difficult trip on the ice, and it became a tragic comedy before they reached the Dorm.

"Bruce," she began seriously, "I promised to go with you to the Washington Banquet last fall. I'm wondering if you will let me break that date."

From a piercing light breaking on his blindness, her voice had changed to a dull hammer on his leaden heart. It beat him back into the darkness. Noticing his silence, she went on,

"I know what you're thinking, Bruce. I'll go with you if you really think it is for the best. But

at the Open Meeting I just felt that I couldn't stand it again. I don't want everyone to think I've led you on until the last minute and then tossed you off as I would a worn-out garment. I haven't done that, have I, Bruce?"

Her voice trembled, and her eyes were misty. He looked at her, not realizing how completely pessimism had embittered his soul.

"No;" he said harshly, "you haven't done anything like that! You wouldn't do anything like that! You have only taken out the heart of me and thrown it into the blackest Slough of Despond. You have merely let me live for three years feeding on your sweetness, that, when I was properly fattened, you might knife me for your table. You women are all the same." His voice was not his own. It frightened her. She choked back tears.

"I never thought you would say that, Bruce. You have hurt me more than you can ever imagine, or ever repair. You know that isn't true; and until you admit it, we shall have to separate entirely and suspend even our friendship, which I wished so much to cherish."

"Yes; you would like to have me fawning around you, bowing and scraping to that ape, MacRae. That's your idea. I've been a doormat all my life with a welcome sign written all over me. Well, wipe your feet on me once more. Do it as often as you like. I'm getting used to my high position in life. I suppose that I ought to be glad to let

you walk over me. It should be a high honor. Perhaps it is."

She realized there was no use in saying more. She was tragically disappointed. Bruce, of all people! He had been such a fine sport once. What had ever gotten into him? Her silence only made him more caustic.

"And let me tell you something. That parasite isn't all you think he is. I've been learning things lately. I'll warn you to watch your step. That fellow isn't satisfied until he has hung up a few garters on his trophy belt."

"That's not true!" she burst out, too angry to hold her lips closed longer.

"I got that on good authority," he challenged. "It just slipped out the other day. I thought he was too slick. Believe what you want. I'm just telling you not to let him get you in a dark corner; that is, of course, unless you want to run the risk," he added, with a sneer.

Impetuously she broke from his restraining arm and started to run up the short walk to the Dorm. She had not taken three hurried steps before her feet slid away and she fell with a dull thud on the ice. He ran to her and picked her up tenderly. She was not badly hurt, but bruised and jarred. She stood a moment in his arms, trembling with chagrin and pain. Suddenly, before she knew what was happening, he crushed her to him and kissed her full on the mouth. Couples were not far away

down the walk. They must have seen him. She became hot and cold with anger.

He looked at her a moment.

"Forgive me," he said. "I want to remember that down the lonely years."

"Perhaps some day you will come to your senses and want to forget that," she breathed, quivering. "I assure you, I will not soon forget it. Let me go. Please. Let me go." Her voice was as level and cold as a drawn rapier.

She hobbled rapidly as possible to the steps and entered without looking back. He cut directly across the campus, already burning with shame. He had done a despicable thing. She was his enemy now. Well, perhaps that would be easier.

But he had thought it right to warn her about MacRae. Nita Carlsen had told him something the other day in the Dorm. Cleverly she had let it fall. Cleverly she had planted the seed. She knew it would get to Fay. That was what she wanted. If she would only believe the bit of gossip, she was sure the track would be clear.

But Fay would not believe it. And so the next day, after lunch, she came to MacRae and spoke with a strange intensity:

"I've decided to accept your invitation to the banquet." He turned to read the depths of her eyes, but they were dark pools of mystery.

He only felt that something was wrong. Perhaps she had decided that he would be more pop-

ular during the basketball season than Wendell. He wondered if she were that type. She was waiting for him to say something.

"Thank you," he smiled vaguely, still wondering. No; she was not that type. It was something else; what, he did not know. He would have to find out.

The banquet was still a month away, but already the Dorm buzzed with whispered rumors. Among them went the word that Fay and Wendell had broken up. Each evening groups met and discussed the latest returns. Next to the society banquets in June this was the most important function of the school year to the co-ed section of the student body. The thing that made dating for this event an interesting adventure was the fact that it had to be with one of your own class.

Thus some couples whose infatuation with each other had proceeded to the ridiculous boiling point at which they refused even to look at another person of the opposite sex, much less say "hello"; and many couples who were quite as far gone, but who were more polite than to reveal their absolute devotion to one at the expense of the feelings of others; and, indeed, all couples of varying degrees of sanity, who happened to be in different classes, were separated. Cruelly and relentlessly the banquet tore them apart.

Three courses were open to them. Either they could go with someone else and suffer most empty

boredom during the affair while they watched furtively each other sitting at different tables; or they could go alone and take the razz of the free-in-heart and the chance of getting stuck next to an unbearable; or they might not go at all, and bring on themselves the just condemnation of both students and faculty. The problem was always of editorial importance. Craig issued his satirical ultimatum; but, in spite of his bachelor irony, some followed each of the three courses.

The midyear exams brought a temporary lull in the banquet commotion. MacRae had never before been fond of examinations, and the reason must have been his unpreparedness, for this year he found them stimulating. He found a certain exhilaration in matching his knowledge against the teacher's questions; in leafing through the pages of his mind, as does a person looking for a line he wants in some unsystematic book of verse, and feeling the thrill when suddenly he runs across the thing desired. But the exhilaration soon wore off; and after the tension of each examination was over, he felt an almost unconquerable lassitude.

After a hard day of mental strain, he found that a chat with Fay in the evening restored his energy and fitted him for hours of concentrated study before retiring. During this week the transition was made from Nita to Fay as an after-dinner companion. He himself was hardly conscious of the natural change, but it was noted by many, par-

ticularly by the two girls themselves. To Nita it meant the loss of her only hold upon MacRae. To Fay it came as a fresh revelation of his feeling toward her. For the first time she became aware of a sincerity and an earnestness in his attitude toward her which at once stirred her with deep gladness and gave her a tremor of apprehension.

After the exhausting week was over, MacRae began a heavy dating campaign. He started in auspiciously on a Tuesday night, when Dr. E. A. Thompson, of the Curry School of Expression, was to give a reading of Drinkwater's famous drama, *Abraham Lincoln.*

He met Fay outside of the Chapel after prayer meeting. On the way over to the Upper Chapel Fay was enthusiastic.

"He was here last year, Ranny. He's wonderful, really. He gave *Disraeli* last time, and, honestly, I'll never forget it. It's hard to believe that a blind man can be so powerfully dramatic."

"Do you like drama?" he asked.

"I'm crazy about it," she said frankly, and the discussion was on by the time they neared the tower entrance.

"Then, why don't you go to the theater?"

"Well, for one thing, it's against the rules of the school."

"Will you go when you are out?"

"Perhaps. I'm not yet convinced that the theater is completely sold to the devil and sensual lust, al-

though I guess you'll have to admit that the majority of plays and motion pictures are vulgarly suggestive, and some openly obscene. I think it is a shame that such a high art, one that could be so nobly used to raise men to heights of strong emotion and fine culture, should be so prostituted to their mental and moral destruction by a giant amusement syndicate which cares more for the millions it can gain by glutting the sordid appetites than for the souls of men."

"You paint the picture too darkly, don't you? Have you no use for realism?"

"Certainly, realism along with idealism. Either without the other is worthless. The so-called realism that plays around in the muck and stays there because it likes it can be only filthy lewdness. I believe in the realism of George Eliot's *Silas Marner,* of Rolvaag's *Giants in the Earth,* of Benet's *John Brown's Body.* They do not leave you to wallow in the mire, though they pass it and point it out. Theirs is the realism of a nude figure by Rodin. I've seen forms in white marble that inspired me to nobler thinking, to a higher conception of the beauty of our bodies, and I've seen others that filled me with the loathing I have for some beasts."

They reached the Upper Chapel and found seats, but MacRae was loath to drop the discussion.

"Say, you should have given that lecture in our modern British poetry class. I'll bet I would have done better on that question about realism and ro-

manticism on the exam. You certainly make a good point there, but I'm glad that you are not silly enough to throw the whole thing over just because it has been corrupted in many places."

"Well, I couldn't be called strictly puritanic. I really don't believe that a Christian is to be distinguished so much by his refraining from certain supposedly taboo amusements as by the way he reacts to the world and the sinful pleasures it offers, and by his positive righteousness and active love. It makes me heartsick to know how this wonderful new art, which has such great possibilities for good, is debased by the greedy and the immoral. Still I agree with you that it is illogical to throw over the art simply because it has been corrupted. We don't do it with painting, with sculpture, with literature, or with music. We choose and weigh. We must do that always if we are to develop character."

Then the professor of public speaking came onto the platform, which was bare save for a small table and a chair set on a soft rug, leading by the hand a tall old man with a dynamic personality, which blindness could not conceal. He was led to the chair on which, without groping or hesitancy, he sat down. The professor stood waiting for the applause to end. Then, without the too verbose inanity so often found in introductions, he presented Dr. Thompson to his audience. The straight white-headed figure was to speak for himself, and he did.

If ever imagination has been kindled to lead the

human mind out of its physical surroundings into another part of the world and into another age, it flamed that night in the listening crowd under the spell of the most perfectly controlled voice MacRae had ever heard. By the magic of that voice the table and chair became at will a small room in a Springfield home, or a massive one in the White House. But through all the scenes built up by the imagination towered the gigantic figure of a personality that was America at her noblest. Lincoln lived again, and talked, and moved: a blind man caused a crowd of students to see him as they had never seen before.

Some of the moments were intense with pathos and suffering; some stirring with vigor; some electric with the thunder of history—all dramatic, human, gripping. Fay and Randall said scarcely a word until the beautiful figure in full dress felt his way back to the chair and sat down. The applause which followed was heavy with the thanks of an enchanted group.

"You see the possibilities of drama," suggested Fay on the way out. "Compare that with the average offering on the screen."

"It was certainly keen. I wouldn't have missed it for anything."

There was something else he wouldn't have missed; that was sitting next to Fay and feeling a unique enjoyment in the companionship of her appreciation. Not one entertainment during all of

his Christmas vacation had brought him one-tenth of the happiness he had felt this evening.

It tremendously increased his pleasure in anything just to have her near to enjoy it too. He would have to tell her that. But he did not do it then. He would wait.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE necessary information could be gained in at least three ways, all rather crude and embarrassing. MacRae ran over them in his mind. He could say bluntly, "What kind of flowers do you wish?" That was no good. It sounded like a wornout wise-crack that smacked of a humorous threat. Anyhow, that put the girl in an embarrassing position. She might want orchids but feel obliged to say "sweet peas." He might say less bluntly, "What color of flowers would you prefer?" No. Still ridiculous—worse! indeed. He finally decided to leave the word "flowers" out of the question entirely; and so, several days before the Banquet, he approached Fay with the final and revised form, which he still considered ridiculous.

"By the way," he said at the end of a conversation, with a nonchalant air, "what color of dress will you wear to the Banquet?"

Fay was not at all surprised at the question. Evidently he had used the Wharton stereotyped form unconsciously. She smiled.

"I'll be wearing old rose, and you might order me some white roses, if that is the real question in your mind."

"It is," he said laughing, his blue eyes half-

closed, delighted at her frankness and simplicity. She was entirely unaffected. "White roses. You know what you want, don't you?"

"Sometimes." Her eyes dreamed out of the Library window across the melting snow. There was a cross of bare grass on it where the steam pipes from the heating plant ran a few feet underground.

"What are the exceptions?" he asked with a sudden earnestness, which she understood and shrank from, embarrassed. She continued to look out of the window and, to change the subject, pointed to the gray-green cross on the campus white.

"That's interesting, isn't it, that cross on the campus. In the spring it is fresh green on an olive banner. Do you know what it makes me think of? I've been reading a book lately. I wish you would read it. I'm sure you would enjoy it." She really meant, "I think it will help you." He felt that, but somehow he did not resent it. Impulsively she rose and walked to a neighboring bookstack. In a moment she returned with a redbound volume, leafing it through, as she swayed gracefully back to her seat.

"It's by Chesterton. He's awfully stimulating. Don't you think so? His paradoxes make you do all sorts of mental gymnastics. This is called *Orthodoxy* and, although he is a Romanist, I think it is a wonderful book. Oh, here it is! Read that."

She passed it across the desk to him with a slender rose-nailed finger on the place. It was at the bottom

of a page of solid, unbroken type opposite another page of solid, unbroken type. The chapter heading, he noticed, was "The Maniac." Before he began to read, he was thinking:

"And she can read this sort of stuff and enjoy it!" He jumped in at the indicated place hesitantly, as a man will dive into water whose coldness he dreads.

"As we have taken the circle as the symbol of reason and madness, we may—" He turned the page. She was watching him. "—very well take the Cross as the symbol at once of mystery and of health. Buddhism is centripetal, but Christianity is centrifugal: it breaks out." He had to stop and recall his physics for that. When he did so, he agreed that it was well put. He went on—"For the circle is perfect and infinite in its nature; but it is fixed forever in its size; it can never be larger or smaller. But the Cross, though it has at its heart a collision and a contradiction, can extend its four arms forever without altering its shape. Because it has a paradox at its center it can grow without changing. The circle returns upon itself and is bound. The Cross opens its arms to the four winds; it is a sign-post for free travelers." He looked at the green cross stretching away—away— By George, it was stimulating! He wanted to read more. He would read more some time.

"Is this the Chesterton who wrote *Lepanto?*" he asked, looking at the title page for the initials.

"Yes, yes. Isn't that a marvelous poem!" she exclaimed, and began to recite ecstatically in a subdued voice, that transmitted perfectly her sudden mood:

" 'Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
Don John of Austria is going to the war,
Stiff flags straining in the night blasts cold,
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettledrums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon—
and he comes.
Don John—'

Oh, I forget the rest. I'm going to learn it all some time. But there's another line I remember. I couldn't forget it. 'Dim drums throbbing in the hills, half-heard.' I love the sound of it. That's poetry!"

"You're right," he said.

"But to get back to Chesterton's prose: it's just as good. Do you think you'll read that?"

"I'm sure I will, especially since you have pointed it out to me."

"Tell me what you think of it when you're through."

"I will." He really did intend to read it, of course.

The bell rang. It always rang when you didn't want it to. When you were in a dull class it would take its own dad-gum time about ringing. He said good-by and walked to class with his mind full of

white roses, green crosses, trumpets, and stiff flags straining, in the midst of which chaos Fay sat pointing him to a passage in a book. The vision was symbolic, although he did not know it. He could find no interpretation. He did not even seek one. He simply tried to brush away the chaos and leave Fay.

A Wharton flower shop was an interesting place before a Washington Banquet. Its interest arose from the variety of characters who visited it on this sole occasion each year, and from the variety of their selections as well as the continual flow of banter and good-humored razz that accompanied each order.

MacRae stepped into the warm earthy scent of fresh greenness and the mingled delicate perfumes of many flowers. The fellows already there watched him come in with a slow smile at their mouths. Among them was Chris Johnson, who found it as hard to ask a girl for a banquet date as to ask her to become his wife.

"Who gets the break this time, Coach?" they asked, winking at each other and refusing to forget the official position he had held during the fall. They all treated him with a restraint which at times worried him and at times pleased him. This was one of the times he was glad. He smiled back at them.

"I'm getting it," he said.

His comeback amused them. Until the group went out boisterously he nosed around as if unde-

cided what to order; but when they had gone, he approached the girlish clerk with the blue smock and spoke in a voice accustomed to giving orders, entirely free from the somewhat halting indecision of the others.

"I want a dozen of the American Beauties, long stems, and a corsage of white rose buds sent to Miss Fay Thurston, at the Ladies' Dorm, please." He gave her time to write the name and address. "Send the bill to D. Randall MacRae, Box 321, at the college. Thank you."

She seemed a little surprised. Most of the college boys asked the various prices and generally selected the medium-priced flowers. When he saw that she had the name and the date correctly, he wrote a few words on a card and asked her to enclose it with the dozen. It read in his small distinguished script:

"FAY:
I'm told that roses may deliver a message without words. Perhaps these will do so for me.
RANDALL."

When the long box was delivered on the afternoon of the Banquet, Fay was getting dressed. She had one sheer silk stocking on and the other in her hand. The knock at the door had interrupted the performance. Nita poked her dark head out of her bedroom door. She too was in scant attire.

"For you, Fay?"

"I guess so. What do you suppose it's all about? If this is a corsage, I'm an elephant."

"Maybe he takes you for one."

"Evidently." She had the box unwrapped at last. Her fingers trembled a little, for her heart told her what the box held. "Oh, Nita, look! Aren't they lovely?"

Just in time she noticed the card, read its message at a glance, and felt a flush warm her cheeks as Nita came across the room. She concealed the card quickly under the dark shimmer of silk stocking in her left hand.

Nita looked at the lovely deep-red petals and the corsage of white buds lying beside them, more perfectly slender and fragile by contrast with the full-blown blooms. There was a glint of envious disdain in her eyes, but her voice was colorless. She was going to the Banquet with a clever young Soph who lived in town and drove a roadster.

"Randall?" she asked, and the word was a question mark; nothing more. She too was learning to control the tumult within. She was thinking, "I wonder if she lets him kiss her too." She was hearing, "Yes; aren't they sweet? May I borrow your vase? I haven't one long enough for these."

"Surely; I'll never have to use it around here, anyhow, unless I buy flowers for myself. But you better get moving. It's five-thirty now."

"Really!" Fay took the opportunity to run into her bedroom. She sat down before the dresser and

read the little note again. This time she pondered over it, and the slow blush returned. She put it safely away in a small drawer. It was the first note he had ever sent her, and it said so little, and so much, that she was both glad and afraid. In any case, she would cherish it.

Over in the Gym, Randall padded about his room in his underwear, with a pair of trousers in each hand and a wrinkle of doubt on his brow. Should he wear a Tux, or not? When he had taken his Tux to the tailor the other day to have it pressed, he had met Craig coming out and had been informed, in mocking tones, that he would be an "ass to appear in that outfit."

"This thing is informal, boy. If you don't believe me now, you will after it's over. A few high hats put 'em on, but you'll be a lot more comfortable if you dress like the *hoi polloi,* I'll bet."

Nevertheless, he had had the suit pressed. Now he danced around trying to make up his mind. At length democracy won over etiquette, and he pulled on the trousers of the dark blue informal suit. Later he was glad he had made that decision.

When he had put the finishing touches on his toilet, he hurried over to the Dorm. He was a little late, and more than a little nervous. There was nothing special in this date. It would probably be a boring banquet, but he felt that it would be significant. It was his "coming out" party. He would appear at an important school function with

Fay. He had won his first round with Wendell, although he did not know how it had happened. Perhaps he would pay dearly for this. Perhaps Fay would rather have gone with Wendell. That was the only reason he could find to explain her hesitation in accepting the date. Well, he was determined to clear that up tonight. He must know where he stood.

He was quite unprepared for the particular loveliness of Fay as she came through the door into the reception room. She wore a soft gray coat with a high fur collar that came above her ears. Her hair had just been washed. Its deep brown had subtle high lights of reddish tint. Her eyes were exceptionally bright. She carried the delicate corsage in her hands.

"Ready?" He choked his eagerness with the inane question as he rose to meet her, for others were waiting in the room. When they reached the door he said:

"Gee, you look wonderful tonight, Fay; especially, I mean, not that you don't always."

"Thanks," she replied, without the usual embarrassment, and without a bit of self-conscious pride. "I like your compliments almost as well as your roses. Thank you so much. They were lovely. I never expected anything like that."

He thought, "That's probably why you got them," but he said, "I'm glad you liked them."

"But I didn't understand your message."

"Too bad; I thought you would. Well, let's forget it until after the banquet. Maybe I'll explain then."

"Which reminds me; I have permission to stop with Vera overnight. She always asks me down after parties. So you'll have a little farther to walk."

"Good."

When they reached the banquet hall beneath the Chapel, he was in a state of quiet ecstacy. They left their wraps upstairs, where most of the student body had gathered in groups, awaiting the call which would start the procession. She slipped out of her coat and became still more lovely in a soft crepe dress of old rose that followed her figure gracefully. Her stockings were gossamer things of dusky gray that ended in neat black pumps. The combination of colors made her delightfully alluring. He stood behind her as he took her coat, and the natural fragrance of her newly-washed hair made his hands tremble.

They were soon caught in a group of Seniors, caught in the mesh of their conversation; but their eyes were saying little friendly things to each other while their lips talked with people. The group expressed its joy at not having to wear the hot caps and gowns which former Senior classes had adopted as apparel for the Banquet. It had been ridiculous. This was much better.

When the clock had finally gone about half an

hour past the time set for the Banquet, the signal was given, and Heyden played the organ as the procession, led by President Brainard and his wife, and the faculty, moved down to the hall below, where long tables told at once what class had decorated each. The place was a riot of color. The evening was a banquet of song, speech, laughter, and fellowship. There was food too, excellent food, but that was not the main attraction, as it had been once in the days when banquets were "banquets," and the first man under the table was a weakling.

At this affair class rivalry always became dangerously intense. In previous years class speakers had been kidnaped and had never shown up until after it was over. There had been riots, fights, campus war, in fact, on that day. But the spirit was gradually being tamed. It still broke loose at times, especially between the Frosh and the Sophs. They entertained the whole group by their constant tricks on each other, varying from the hanging of a huge bib above the Frosh table to the distribution of bottles of milk among them and the leading of a live goat to their president's chair. Flags were torn down, razzing yells hurled back and forth with the force of ancient ballistæ, and self-emulatory songs sung to drown out the opposite group. The uproar at times was deafening. Probably the only thing that prevented bloodshed—though one man did sprain his ankle making away with the Frosh flag won at the flag rush in the fall—was the opening

of the program and the introduction of the toastmaster.

MacRae was exceedingly interested in the whole performance. He did not know there was so much pep in the place. They were certainly far from dead. But he himself joined rather half-heartedly in the Senior yells.

The program was ingenious, its theme being, "Our College and Its Relation to World Needs." The titles of the numbers on the program began with letters which, read downward, spelled the word "Washington" in capitals.

The first selection was composed of "War Songs," sung by one of the Alumni who had been through the hell of France in 1917, '18. He sang with a ringing baritone that brought back old days, their glory and their agony.

He was followed, logically, by the Senior speaker on "Armament Reduction." With a challenging emphasis he drove home the fact that not disarmament conferences alone, but the spread of Christianity in all the world, could ever effect permanent world peace. MacRae followed his line of reasoning, found it sound, but considered both attempts but the pipe-dreams of idealists, never to be realized in our day, or for many æons hence perhaps.

The Junior speaker on "Soldiers True" struck the same note. And after the harp solo, he heard that dominant note struck again and again, as if someone were ringing the tower bell. It ran through

every speech—the Sophomore's on "International Law," the Freshman's on the domestic menace of "Narcotics," the Academy representative's on "Goals," the Faculty speaker's on "The Teacher and the Times." Even the third music number, entitled "Our College Songs," had that deep undertone. In the last speech, by the gentle, lovable President, it could be heard mellow and rich as a bell long rung.

He spoke on "New Plans," and MacRae listened, deeply moved as this white-haired seer spoke, this old prophet who had given half a century to the little college on a Midwestern knoll, and whose life had been the inspiration of hundreds who had passed through its halls. Quietly he outlined his ideals for Wharton progress and growth. New buildings were to go up, all built upon the same cornerstone inscription, *Christo et regno eius.* There should be a larger faculty, increased endowment, a more efficient organization—all for one purpose: that more young people might receive with their education a living faith. He seemed to be charting the course of a strong and staunch vessel. He was a Columbus still peering into the gloom of rough seas, and commanding, "Sail on!" even though he might never see the shores of his visioned land. This was to be his last Washington Banquet as president of Wharton.

Afterwards, in the frosty air, MacRae walked out Jefferson Street, with Fay's hand lightly on his arm.

A note had been struck at that banquet which he would never be able to get out of his thinking permanently. But for a time he could hear nothing but the music of Fay's voice. She was asking him how he liked it.

"I thought it was fine; a bit too long, though."

"That's usually the trouble; but they're lots of fun, I think. Wasn't Prexy dear?"

"Yes; I can't help admiring that man." But quickly as he could he shifted the subject. "Do you know what I liked best about that banquet?"

Quite innocently she said, "No; what?"

"You."

"Is that all?" she joked. "I didn't have anything to do with the banquet." She was glad it was dark. She did not like to blush. It was girlish, and she should be past that stage. She did not know that it was only the answering call of love in her heart to the love in his voice. She knew he was studying her face; so she looked straight ahead.

He was saying, "No? I thought you were the banquet. To me it seemed as if the whole thing were staged just to let me know how it would feel to step out officially with you. By the way, did you notice that Bruce wasn't there?"

"Yes."

He could make nothing out of the tone; so he had to go on:

"Fay, I wish you would tell me why I had to

wait for your answer about this date. It's bothered me a lot. I don't want to hang around if you really care for Bruce."

She said nothing. To him that was a bad sign.

"Don't you want to go out with me any more?"

"That depends—" she began slowly, but the sentence was never finished. Her heart said "Yes"; her reason said "No." She did not know how to finish it. He thought it was complete. He thought it was his answer. He had heard that Bruce had had a scrap with Fay before Christmas. He had not been seen with her since. So she was just using him as a bait to bring Wendell back again. That was it. She would continue to use him as long as he served the purpose.

"That's it, is it?" he mused aloud. "You think you can use me for a while, eh?"

It took her a little time to interpret the words and the sudden chill in his voice. The air was cold. They had reached the house where she was to stay. All the windows on the first floor were dark.

"I—I don't understand," she finally broke out, knowing that she did, only too well.

"You wouldn't," he said, with biting sarcasm. It was his greatest fault. He was always sorry for it when it was too late. Then he realized what a fool he was. What claim did he have upon this girl? He hadn't asked her to marry him. He hadn't even told her of his love yet, although he was sure she could read it in his eyes and voice.

They had reached the door when she said,

"I'm sorry, Ranny. I don't know what has come over you all of a sudden. I was having such a good time. You wanted to know why I had to ask you to wait for my answer for this. Would you still like to know?" She stood with her hand on the knob. The house was open to her at any time. It was as free as her own home.

"I have an idea I know already," he said gruffly.

"But I'm sure you don't. I had a date with Bruce for this banquet. He made it last fall. I had to break it before I could accept yours. Are you still mad at me?"

The way she asked that question simply broke him up. What an ass he was!

"I'm sorry, Fay, really I am. I'm awfully jealous. I thought you were working me just to get Bruce back."

"Well, you can see it isn't that, can't you?"

"Yes; I can now. Listen, you wanted to know what that cryptic note meant this afternoon. Do you know yet what it meant?"

"I think I do," she said softly.

"Well, I want you to be sure, Fay." He took one little gloved hand and drew her toward him. "I love you. I've said that before to other girls, but I never knew what the words meant until tonight. Do you believe me?"

"I don't know."

He did not like that.

"Don't you care for me at all?"

"I don't know that either. I'm all mixed up inside. I can't explain."

"Is there anyone else? Do you write to anyone?"

"Yes; I have a friend in Los Angeles. We correspond quite regularly."

"Then it depends on him, does it?"

"No; that isn't the problem."

"What is?"

"I can't tell you tonight; it's cold out here—and——"

"Pardon me, dear." He used the word unconsciously. "I'm an awful boor. Your feet must be frozen."

"It's my fault. I should have asked you in, but I think they've gone to bed upstairs; and anyway I didn't want them to hear you in your tantrums." She smiled. He wanted to kiss her, terribly wanted. He knew he could not; so he pressed her hand and said "Good-night" a little huskily.

He watched her go in, waved his hand, turned up his coat collar, and walked home briskly. His ears tingled with the sharp frost. He warmed them with his hands, took some deep breaths of the cold air, as refreshing as an iced drink, and began to whistle. The glitter of the far stars seemed brighter than usual. Perhaps it was the clear coldness of the night.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The days after the Washington Banquet are March days—windy, rainy, ague days, with alternate chills and fever. They are days when you sit in the Library and listen to the wind howl about the buildings; when you watch the rain drive before it in gusty sheets, and see the tall elms bend tortuously in its grasp. But the early buds are out, and the campus cross is bright green on olive.

During these days MacRae began to be with Fay constantly, whenever he had opportunity. There was a lull in the school activities. Basketball was over; baseball, track, and tennis had not yet properly begun. The Senior girls' basketball team, under MacRae's coaching, had won the tournament again this year, and in appreciation the girls had given him a fine golf sweater; but neither that, nor even the friendships which he had made with many of them, had been his real reward. It had been the occasional hour he had had to watch Fay in action; to admire her supple grace and her healthy vigor. He had a quality of leadership about his coaching which even the girls came to admire and comment on.

But in spite of, or perhaps it was because of, those frequent conversations with Fay, he still found time

for deep solitary thought. He finished Chesterton's book and found that it certainly undermined his cynical, skeptical position. It showed him that he had built on props of reeds. His class in Bible also had opened his vision to many things he had not understood before. Certainly his had been a superficial position.

He began to slight his other studies to read portions of the Bible. He discovered that it had some passages of the most beautiful and powerful prose, the most fantastic and lovely imagery, the loftiest poetry, the deepest pathos, the most tender emotion, the most eloquent restraint. He had never known that such a body of great literature existed in one volume. He found that the modern poets were only seeking to regain the free passionate beauty of Solomon's song of love, the song of songs. It was certainly not puritanical in its imagery, but neither was it gross. It lifted the sensual into the beauty of ideal romance. Some of the psalms too charmed him with the free, rhythmic cadence that the moderns sought; the same use of alliteration and refrain. The short story of Esther was a masterpiece; and the story of Ruth, too. How was it possible for great universities to neglect so thoroughly this body of some of the world's finest literature, with its lofty ethics and gripping realism, even if they did not agree with all of its teachings? Surely there was some incongruity here. There must be some-

thing in the Book which made it a menace to the generally accepted scientific view of the world, and man, and God. But he came to see that, in dropping it largely from their curriculums, they had dropped something which had been a source of inspiration to great writers in all centuries. He had noticed that fact in his English courses.

But although he was gradually coming to an appreciation of the great literary qualities of the Book, he was still far from a true appreciation of its central message.

While Randall was spending more time in reading it, Wendell had given up his study of it entirely. Craig noticed it sadly, spoke to him twice about it, and then resorted to prayer; which Wendell had also given up, and which MacRae had known only as a formal ritual in public.

It was while MacRae was thus reading the Scriptures without understanding them that Dr. Henry Nostrum came to Wharton. For some years a special series of religious services had been held each fall and each spring. The fall campaign had been under the consecrated leadership of the president. But for the spring services of two weeks duration, a stranger to Wharton had been secured.

Before he arrived a cut of the firm, rough, Rodinesque face appeared in the college weekly, with a brief sketch of his character and work. No great enthusiasm was manifest, but little groups met al-

most daily in various places about the campus to pray for the success of the meetings, for God's blessing on the speaker and on the hearers.

In the fall MacRae had taken in one or two of the meetings and then found that he was "too busy." But after he attended the first service under Dr. Nostrum, he knew that he would not miss a night if he could help it. He went alone. Dates were not usually in order for a religious service at Wharton, except perhaps for church on Sunday evening. Practically the whole school turned out. They nearly always did the first night, but this time the Chapel was filled night after night. The meetings ran from seven until eight. They began with a song service, and a Wharton song service was something well worth attending, in itself. Fay was at the piano. Following the congregational singing there was usually a special number of music—solo, duet, or quartette—and then the speaker. MacRae had been asked to play a trumpet solo, but had refused, remembering his experience at the prayer meeting.

When Dr. Nostrum rose, following his introduction, several things about him were particularly noticeable. His hair was gray and thinning, revealing a high, wide forehead, wrinkled as if with deep meditation. MacRae didn't really see this, but knew it was there. It was the dark flash of the piercing eyes under overhanging gray brows that first struck him. They looked at an audience the way a mother looks at her son when she is searching for the some-

thing beneath a bland exterior. Between the eyes were two vertical creased lines. His nose was large; so were his ears, but especially his mouth, wide above a bulldog jaw, with straight lips compressed tightly. Before he opened them, MacRae knew how the voice would sound. It would be hard, but not harsh; husky, but not hoarse; deep, but not sonorous. And so it was. It was a coach's voice talking to a bunch of men out under painted goal posts on a level field. It rang with conviction. MacRae had come to notice the presence and the lack of that quality in voices. It made a tremendous difference in the way he listened.

But it was not the voice. It was the overpowering logic of the man, from his very first sentence, which held MacRae as he had never before been held by a speaker. He felt that this man had nothing in common with the ranting evangelist, or the Bible teacher whose chief stock in trade is to prove that he is right and all others wrong. He had thought problems through; doubtless he had read Ingersoll, Paine, Huxley, Hume, Spinoza, Kant and Spencer. But he had also read some men on the other side. He had come to a rational conviction through thorough examination of the evidence. So it seemed to MacRae. He was a preacher to college students; he knew their problems, had kept up with them, and knew how to meet them.

At times the man would become dynamically eloquent. His English was the language of culture

and refinement; some of his expressions silver-tongued in beauty; others dramatic in power and intensity.

MacRae listened raptly. He did not want to go when the hour was up, but he remembered that there was more to come, and went away with the feeling of one who lays down an interesting chapter of a story "to be continued"—the pleasant feeling of lingering anticipation.

Thereafter he found the chapel services each morning and the evening services to be the high lights in the day. When a man is in real mental and spiritual struggle, every dearest earthly object becomes entangled in that strife. So Fay was mixed up in all of his thinking, but while the inner battle raged he consciously avoided the subject when he was with her. Once more he was seriously awakened to the importance of Christ's claim on a human life. Several times he had laughed off the impression. Now it was no longer a matter that could be laughed off with the serene indifference of the true egoist. This was something to which he had to say yes or no. He might say nothing, but that meant "no."

The last evening of the series came quickly, just before spring recess. MacRae sat near the back of Upper Chapel. That night the special music was given by the Gospel Team Quartette, four young men who represented Wharton throughout the neighboring towns and cities and even took trips as

far east as New York and Philadelphia. They sang a hymn that flung itself at MacRae like a challenge:

"Brave men are needed for Christ today
Out where the battle is long;
Forth at the summons! the call obey—
Quit you like men! be strong!"

The refrain ended in ringing male voice harmony—

"Quit you like men! be strong!"

Dr. Nostrum gave his last address with the most burning earnestness. It searched hearts, and tried consciences, and weighed lives in the balances, and hacked away at pride. MacRae found himself becoming afraid. This man would get him yet, if he didn't stop. He had lived through two weeks of constant strain. It did not need Dr. Nostrum's quiet closing appeal to lay the question before him. It had been there for two weeks:

"What shall I do then with Jesus, who is called Christ?" That was the question. He could not get away from it; he could not sidestep it; he could not jump over it. There it stood before him, no matter where he turned.

At the close of the address the quartette sang one of their favorite numbers:

"Amid life's busy, hurrying throng—
The gay, the sad, the weak, the strong—
As I am traveling along
I want my life to tell for Jesus.

That everywhere I go
Men may His goodness know,
I want my life to tell for Jesus."

As they returned silently to their seats, Dr. Nostrum uttered the invitation from God's Word to come. It was not the usual long-drawn-out affair, repeated and repeated until it becomes burlesque. It was spoken with such heartfelt sincerity the first time, that souls were moved. Heads were bowed, but MacRae kept his eyes open and saw here and there a young form rise—a slim girl with her bobbed head bent humbly; a broad-shouldered chap; two—three—more. They stood quite still as Dr. Nostrum waited for the Holy Spirit to speak in the still small voice. The piano sang softly, and everywhere hearts were praying.

MacRae knew he should rise. He had never felt such conviction of his need of a Saviour, of a Lord, to guide his life and control his destiny. He was being attracted as by a magnet to this powerful Personality, this King of Kings lifted up to his inner vision. Then something in his heart rose up and said "No," clearly, coldly. He turned away sorrowing, like the rich young ruler of old. He wanted to follow Christ, but there were other things he wanted also. He couldn't have both, it seemed. He would cling to his possessions, his ambitions, his friends.

In more of a statement than an appeal Dr. Nostrum put into words MacRae's struggle:

"What is this power within the human soul able to defy the Almighty; to deny the pleading of omnipotent Love; to turn from the eyes of divine compassion and yearning; to turn the back and walk slowly away with bowed head? How is it that created man can say 'No' to the uncreated Son of God? This is not the light jest, the railing mockery, the Judas betrayal. This is the cowardice of selfishness; the weakness of pride. It is young, gifted, earnest youth sincerely anxious to know what they shall do to inherit eternal life, but turning away from the only answer—sorrowfully. They think they will have to pay too much for something that is priceless, something without which riches are ashes, love is a forgotten dream, happiness is a mirage, light is darkness, and all material things are nothing."

But MacRae turned his back—sat still—and went out of that service confirmed in the misery of having once faced the Lord of Glory, recognizing Him as such, and having still declined to accept His challenge, scorning His love.

Fay Thurston had been praying for three or four persons as she played "Have Thine Own Way, Lord," softly, during the invitation. She prayed for Nita; for Randall; and for Bruce, who wasn't there, who hadn't been to any of the meetings. It was tragic, and she felt in a sense responsible for his sad lapse. But what could she do? It had had to come. The experience had shown her one thing

of importance that she needed to learn. It showed her that it is impossible to be sure of the change in a person who has become a Christian because the one he loves wants him to. She was sure that it had been deeper than this in the case of Wendell; but his actions, now that hope of winning her was gone, seemed to indicate a shallow experience. She was sorry. It showed her further what she did not like to see: that the same danger awaited her in the case of MacRae. Why was it that she had not fallen in love with a Christian? It was curious. Then she remembered her mother's word, and laid the burden down in faith.

Nita had given up her aggressive tactics with MacRae when she saw that his attentions had turned to her roommate, but secretly she cherished the hope that she yet might win him. Her eyes still had a power. He had often answered the call. It elated her to see him come across the crowded Dorm reception room after supper if Fay did not happen to be around. But jealousy tortured her when she saw him with Fay.

She had roomed for months with the sweet character, and still the rebuke of the quiet life only made her crabby and sour. The peace that Fay manifested only irritated the more her own turmoil; Fay's neatness made her the more careless; Fay's devotional life made her satirical and hard. It was the common case of differences becoming more acute by proximity.

Fay was disappointed that her prayers seemed in vain; that her life seemed of no effect but to antagonize. She could not understand it; but she went on, determined to see it through to the end of school. She went away to visit some friends during Easter vacation. Nita stayed in Wharton.

That week, the week following MacRae's decision against Christ, he missed Fay with an almost unbearable sense of want. His life had an empty void that nothing could fill. It was as though a swift cloud had come upon one lying in the sun's warmth with his eyes closed, and who felt the dark chill thing cover him and the world about him. To pass the evenings, he took Nita out. He talked about Fay constantly to her, and she kidded him along as a sister might. Indeed, he came to feel toward her as he might toward a sister. She was glad of the chance to be with him, even if it meant listening to eulogies of Fay and answering questions about her. The subconscious sense of failure led her to adopt an attitude that fitted perfectly into his mood. She was content to be with him. He was glad of her company, and of what he took to be her sympathy.

In all their conversation reference had never been made to an incident which neither had forgotten—MacRae remembering with embarrassment, Nita with passionate longing—the incident in an Evanston home. MacRae tried to forget it, and could not. Nita wanted to remember, and did.

Their walks began immediately after supper. It was the time when reawakening nature proclaims the resurrection of her Lord; when white lilies stand with waxlike beauty in the churches; and, in the blue-domed cathedral of the open, crocuses begin to burn their candle flames for the dead; and robins return to the campus trees; and at sunset there is a hush, a still warm breath, a stir of awakening earth. Sometimes he took her out for supper; but each evening in the silent twilight they could be seen strolling out together.

Wendell noticed it, and sat in his room writing. All day he worked in the village lumber yard making some extra money. He would come back dirty to the dreary, cold, and empty Gym for a shower, with muscles in legs and arms and back swollen and tired with the unusual exertion. Then he would sit down at the window desk with paper and pencil. He was working on something he had started one night when he could not sleep, the night that Fay had broken definitely and permanently with him. He worked with a flare of inspiration, and revised with cool care. Often he would spend half an hour on one paragraph.

When he saw MacRae and Nita pass in the evening hush, he sat for an hour trying to figure out what MacRae was doing. He gave up finally and took his pencil to write. He went to bed early, for he had to be at work by seven o'clock.

Before the week was over the penciled lines had

been run through the typewriter and given final form. He read them over with a sort of pleased satisfaction. And the Friday night after school reopened, he had the beginning of his reward. The preliminary short-story contests were held in the various societies. The following week an Open Meeting would be held in Upper Chapel, at which the stories taking first and second places in each society would be read and the loving cups awarded to the three best in the school.

MacRae was at his society meeting when Wendell read his story. It surprised him; astonished him. It took first place easily, and caused a ripple of comment among the judges. And so, when the following Friday came, Bruce dressed himself carefully, read over his story once more, and went to the palm-decorated Upper Chapel, taking a seat alone in the rear.

He listened in a half tremble as the other stories were read. They were good. He didn't stand a show. He appeared fifth on the program, and when he walked to the platform and faced the audience, he saw Fay and Randall sitting on his right. Then he began to read. In his voice of deep melancholy he told a story that moved the listeners with its sublime pathos. It was a prose Enoch Arden. The scene was set in his old home town, in the coal-mining district of Nova Scotia, which he knew so well. It was set at the bottom of a seven-hundred foot shaft, at the coal face two thousand feet under

the sea, and on the main haul. It was the story of a soul lost in blackness, the record of a personal emotion made concrete in a different environment.

As he read, the young people were captivated by the depth of his emotion, the perfection of his technique, the beauty of some of his phrases, the simplicity of his realism.

He walked to his seat oblivious of the clapping. He had delivered the message of his heart to her. Now she would know how he felt. That was all he cared. But when the ballots of the judges had been received and opened, it was found that the first place was awarded to a short story entitled *The Pit*, by Bruce Wendell. He went forward numbly to take the cup, and still numbly he took the eager hands of congratulation. Only when he found Fay's hand extended to him, when he found himself looking into her eyes, did the numbness drop off. The touch was electric.

She said quietly, "Congratulations, Bruce. That was some story."

"Thank you, Fay," he replied. That was all.

That night he slept soundly. Fay did not. She lay awake wondering why it was she could not return the love of such a man, and why she could not help loving MacRae.

CHAPTER TWENTY

It began quite simply. A date with Fay usually did. It also usually began quite nervously—for MacRae. This was no exception. He dressed with his customary fastidiousness. He did not tremble visibly, but he just felt nervous inside, as if he were about to address a large audience and did not know what to say. He combed his hair three times, brushed his dark coat, adjusted his tie twice, smiled at himself in the mirror, then crossed the strip of campus to the Dorm.

His nervousness increased as he waited.

After her bell was rung she threw on her wrap, patted a wave of her hair, and gave her exquisite nose the faintest touch with a little powder puff from the dresser, bending forward toward the large mirror.

She came down the stairs radiant.

"Fay!" he said in smothered delight. Every fresh sight of her was a new sensation of pleasure.

"Hello, Ranny." She had a particular way of saying his name that was all her own. He liked it —loved the way she said it.

"Will you get permission to go down to the Greek's?"

"M-hm, wait."

She walked into Mrs. Carwell's office. He heard her through the open door.

"May we go downtown after the recital, Mrs. Carwell?"

"Who are 'we'?"

"Why, Ranny and I," she replied, with evident irritation at the question.

"Oh, Mr. MacRae. Yes, certainly."

Fay came out pouting. She took his hand and dragged him out of the door as if she were in a hurry to be off. He followed clumsily, as a man will when led by a girl. When they were outside, she burst into a little laugh:

"She doesn't seem to trust even Seniors, does she?"

"Perhaps she knows you."

"Now Ranny, you do too, don't you?"

"Sometimes I think so."

"Sometimes?"

"Yes; it's funny, Fay. At times I think you like me, and then again—well——"

"You know I like you." She looked up sweetly at him as she spoke. She thought of another to whom she had said those words, but with such different significance. Once they told the whole truth; now they said only half of it.

"Listen, Fay," he went on, "let's not go to this thing tonight. Let's go for a walk. I don't feel like sitting through that stuff."

She seemed to hesitate. The stars were out; the

moon had been up long, a soft, clear white. Lilacs scented the air with their delicious lavender. The evening was too sweet to spend in Upper Chapel, even if its windows were up.

"All right," she agreed at last.

They started out toward Irving Avenue, strolling as only lovers can, each slow step a delight. The air was warm. She had taken off her wrap, and he carried it on his right arm. A finger or two of his left hand entwined with hers gently. As they walked, they swung their arms together childishly without knowing it, conscious only that the light physical link bound them, not conscious of how or why.

"This is some night, Fay," he said at length, when they had walked a short distance in silence.

"It is. I feel as if I were playing Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata.' Don't you love it?"

"I most certainly do—which gives me an idea! I've a key to Celt Hall. Will you come in and play it just for me? Please."

"I should like to. Would the Celts mind? I'm an Ael, you know." Her trilling laugh gave him a keen delight.

"Of course not."

They were passing the Gym, and turned aside to the entrance. Just as they went into the gloom inside the door, they met Bruce Wendell coming out. He started as if he had been struck; gave MacRae a look that was hideous in the semidarkness.

"Hello," he said hoarsely, and walked out.

"Wait here a minute, dear," said MacRae. "I'll get the key. It's in my room."

She saw the light flash on for a moment, then it went out and he returned.

"Did you see that awful look Bruce gave us?" she asked. "Do you suppose he is still mad at me?"

"Mad *for* you, I guess. Poor Bruce! He's taking it pretty hard. You know he is crazy about you."

They were at the literary society door. It opened into a hall with a high ceiling, and tall windows draped with heavy blue curtains gold-fringed. They made out the grand piano at one side of the slightly raised platform. He locked the door behind them and led her down the aisle between the high-backed, formal chairs. It was a ghost room now. The chairs were all empty. The moonlight shone brightly between the dark draperies. They would need no other light.

He sat beside her on the piano bench, one arm behind her. He was completely enthralled as she interpreted Beethoven, playing as if she were alone with the moon. The music was moonlight on moving water, breaking water, that curled into green-gold foam and rippled in little eddies of light between black rocks.

When it was over, they both rose simultaneously. He did not ask for more. It would have been sac-

rilege to shatter the perfect unity of that instant of eternity with some other emotion.

"Thank you," he said simply, "that was wonderful."

They went out into the silver world again The long, high, bare windows of Upper Chapel were lit. Two of them were raised. They heard the sound of many hands clapping, like the sound of boxes of dominoes being emptied upon a table somewhere.

"I did want to hear Greta tonight," she said, as they listened to the sound thin out and die away.

"She is good, isn't she? Awfully clever at dialect stuff. Do you want to go yet?"

"N-no, I guess not. There will be another expression recital before we graduate; there may not be another night like this."

"That's what I was thinking."

They passed the little clump of pines, went on out past Lawson Field to the flat section of town that had been laid out, but not yet built up. The concrete sidewalks were there, and the rough streets, but, as yet, few homes. These would come; at least, some of them would be homes, with cozy fires in winter, children, books, meals, happiness. Some would be just empty houses, unoccupied. Some would be worse: houses where souls would dwell in constant irritation, or to which they would come only to sleep and eat. But some of them would be homes. They talked of that possibility as they walked.

"In a few years we will come back, and we won't know this place," Fay remarked.

"I suppose not."

"I hate to think of leaving. I've come to love Wharton. It always makes me blue when I realize that we graduate in another six weeks. Doesn't it you?"

"Well, I dread leaving you, Fay."

They were approaching an old stone wall that had surrounded an ancient estate for years, and had been built low and broad as if just for the convenience of strolling Wharton couples. It made a comfortable seat, the more so because it had no back rest; and when you thought the girl was tired, there was only one thing to do. MacRae did it. She seemed to resist at first a little, only to relax more completely in his arms when she yielded. Her head was on his shoulder. Thus they dreamed and talked in that delicious realm of glory which is youth.

Finally she asked, "What are you going to do next year, Ranny?"

"That's what I don't know, Fay. Probably I'll go into advertising."

"Why don't you stay here and coach? Prexy wants you to, doesn't he?"

He was silent for a moment.

"Oh, I'm fed up on this place, honey. I get so sick of this religious stuff. It's overdone. You get nothing else. I just feel like getting out and having a rarin'-to-go time again. I've stood it all year

for your sake. Did I ever tell you why I came here? No? I told you once, but that was the bunk. The real reason is, I followed you. I broke with Dad over this. I loved you that first night I saw you in Brooklyn. Listen, darling, you've got to listen! I love you, Fay. I want you for my sweetheart—always!" He tried to kiss her, but felt her grow a little rigid in his arms, and knew he could not. She would resent it.

"I'm sorry, Ranny. I thought you were changing. I thought you had come to see things differently. I hoped and prayed it might be so."

"Aw, listen, honey. I'm not a bad sort. I'm just not religious, that's all. I know I'm different, but I'd make you happy—honest I would!"

"You couldn't if you don't love the One who is fairer than ten thousand to me. If that bond doesn't unite us, Ranny, we can never be happy. I would make you miserable just the way I have made Nita. And I would be just as miserable."

"But can't you leave religion out of this, dear?"

"It isn't religion simply. If it were, I could just say—as some do—I'll keep mine, you take yours; or none, if you please. It's not that. It's two entirely different views of life and what we are here for. You might as well hitch horses facing in opposite ways and expect them to pull the load. You want to get the most out of life; so do I. But you want to take one way, I another. I've tried your way, and found it doesn't give one real happiness."

"I wish you wouldn't preach, dear. I'm sick of it. And besides, it doesn't become you." He knew that he lied. She was lovely in this moment, her eyes deeply earnest, yearning.

"I'm not preaching. I'm simply telling you why we won't be able to work together. You see I was once in your position. Life was meaningless in those days. I had to go out constantly in search of pleasure. But the giddy whirl never satisfied me. I was constantly bothered with problems I couldn't solve. Then Robert Harkness played here one night. I've told you the story already. I yielded my life that night to Jesus in a surrender I had never made before and it has been glorious ever since. I have a peace and joy the world can't give. Of course, it has been hard at times—" She started to say, "and this is one of the times," but choked the words in a dry sob.

Suddenly she slipped from his arms to the ground.

"Let's go home," she pleaded, and started off.

He arose and followed her. She set a rapid pace. He was enraged at her evident carelessness, for so he interpreted her actions, and his Scotch pride boiled in his veins. Well, if that was how she felt! If that was all she cared! If her fool ascetic religion could make her this cold-blooded, let her go. He was through. He would show her she couldn't fool with him this way. She wasn't so much anyhow.

Then he looked and saw her lip quiver, and his heart smote him in anguish. His love for her surged through his veins with a new and anguishing intensity that was excruciatingly painful. Yet because of his Scotch stubbornness he said sarcastically,

"Is this a mile run?"

"Please don't, Ranny; I'm not well."

He said nothing for another block. His blood still raced. They walked in silence, save for the rapid click of her light heels, the slower clap of his heavier ones.

Then the reaction set in. What was this he was doing? He was a fool. He had to have her. He would never be happy without her.

"Forgive me, Fay, won't you?"

"For what?"

"Oh, acting like an ass. I didn't mean to laugh at your faith, or anything like that. I just felt mad that you should let a little thing like that come between us."

"A little thing! It's the biggest thing in life to me. It may not be to you."

"I realize it now. I'm sorry. Do you forgive me?"

"Yes."

"Suppose I become a Christian, what then?"

"Don't talk that way, please. If you do decide to be a Christian, it will have to be because you can't help loving the Lord Jesus, not because you think you want me for your wife. That's the way matters stand. Let's drop it, please, for tonight anyhow.

I'm not myself. I don't know what I'm saying. I'm sorry."

"Oh, all right."

Some of his chagrin returned.

They reached the campus before the recital was over. He took her to the Dorm at once. They did not linger on the steps as usual. She turned for a moment under the porch light and faced him. He saw a tear glisten on her cheek as she said, "Good-night."

Then she ran in, ran up the stairs, and threw herself on her bed in the darkness and cried in little short quivering sobs. There Nita Carlsen found her, still sobbing, when she came in half an hour later. She would tell her nothing.

MacRae turned from the steps with feet as heavy as his heart. He felt sick. He walked across the campus muttering to himself. He felt as if the bottom had dropped out of everything. Life was a dirty fraud.

He did not know one could ever feel like this. This happened in books, and on the stage. This was the way you felt when you saw Walter Hampden in the closing scene of "Cyrano de Bergerac"; but always the curtain would go up, and there would be the "dead" Cyrano, the tragically disappointed, heroic Cyrano, happy and smiling, bowing to the applause, with Roxane's lovely hand in his. It was time the curtain should go up. This feeling was lasting too long.

His feet dragged and dragged. Never had he so longed for a flask of whiskey. Now he understood the power of the stuff. He had been gloriously drunk on several occasions at Princeton. Now he began to realize why it wasn't used alone at hilarious parties, why it was the "balm of hurt minds."

He walked, somehow, down Center Street to Main, and past the Methodist Church. The hanging globe was a basket of colored light in the gloom of the alcove entrance. It spoke to him of the night he had sat on the upper hidden steps with Fay, eating a box of candy he had bought.

He walked toward the lunch room. Couples from the recital began to drift past on their way to the Greek's. He nodded to them abstractedly. Reaching the lunch room, he slipped onto a stool at the counter, and ordered an egg sandwich and coffee. The laughter of a couple of rough men at a near-by table grated on his nerves. He gulped the coffee down and hurried out, but walked away from the place at the same dragging pace. Due west he went, out over the railroad tracks, on the road to the County Poor Farm.

What a fool stunt this whole thing was! He began to reproach himself. He had given up his father, another year at Princeton, a chance for a soft job and plenty of money—everything for this girl! And what a flop she had turned out to be! No; confound it! She was all right. She was some girl.

She just wasn't suited for him, that's all. She was too good for him.

After he had walked two slow miles, thinking, and trying not to think, he turned abruptly in the middle of the clay and gravel road and began to retrace his steps.

When he reached the "Y" House, his reverie was broken by the noise coming from the building. He crossed the street and entered. The hall was dark. From the head of the front stairs came the sounds of riot. He could hear the hiss of water, laughter, cries, the jarring thud of falling bodies, the crash of furniture; but he could not make out what was going on. While he stood in the middle of the stairway, deliberating, a tall form entered the front door and started up the stairs toward him, and, seeing him, said in hard, even tones:

"What's all this?" He recognized the voice of Dean Harley.

"I don't know, sir. I just stepped in to see myself."

The Dean soon had lights on, and a curious sight met their eyes. Nearly all of the occupants of the house stood abashed before them, most of them in pajamas or shreds of pajamas. An inch of water rippled on the floor of the front room. Carpets were ruined, chairs overturned, books thrown about, general wreckage everywhere.

It turned out, from the explanation of the Senior class president who was in the mess bare to the

waist, that three Freshmen had gone up on the roof to sleep in the warm spring air. There was a flat space only about six feet square on the peak, and the upper-classmen, thinking that the green young things were endangering their lives with the possibility of rolling off in their sleep, had sought to force them down by the use of the powerful fire-hose extended out of the front window and directed from the porch roof. The device had succeeded in bringing them down, but it had only transferred the scene of battle to the interior, which was much more fun. That was all there was to it.

MacRae listened and went away sardonically grinning. He had missed this sort of thing, rooming in the Gym, but evidently Wharton had it as well as the other schools. This was the picture most people had of college life. He bit his lip. College life! What did they know about what he was going through! That was college life too. It was life anywhere; it was just disappointment.

Well, it was over now. He'd just have to make the best of it. He'd go out with Nita. She was pretty keen at that. She was more nearly his type. Why the deuce couldn't he fall for her? Why did you have to fall for someone so different? It was all a silly joke. He had decided to take it that way, to laugh it off, tell the old man he'd been a fool, and go back. He had decided that by the time he reached the Gym.

He had swung the door open and entered when

a form met him in the dimness of the hall. It was the same drawn face he had seen hours earlier, only it was more ghastly. A low voice that shook with passionate anger said:

"You cur!" and waited.

Could it be Wendell? MacRae could not account for good old Bruce being in such a state. The voice went on:

"Why don't you carry on your affairs with your own kind? She's not your kind?" The voice rose: "I love her! Do you hear? I love her—and she was pure until you came along with your smooth line and your sugarcoated tongue! You hypocrite!"

It was Wendell all right. MacRae began to get what it was all about. Wendell had seen him come in with Fay, had seen the light flash on in his room and then off. He started to explain the hideous mistake; but just as he opened his mouth a fist shot out of the darkness and struck him a smashing blow on the jaw. He heard something snap; felt a stabbing pain; then his head whirled and he fell. He could now hear Wendell but faintly, although he was roaring:

"Get up, you yellow snake! Don't lie there whining! Get up and give me a chance to whip you!"

MacRae tried to move his legs. They refused to function. His head was whirling more violently. A door opened somewhere; the light from it spun in a great wheel. He could just make out a far-away excited voice,

"What's the matter, Bruce?" It sounded like Craig's, but it was thin and away off.

Then came darkness.

When the light came back, bringing pain with it, he found himself lying on his own bed. Craig was sitting beside him. A cold cloth dripped on his forehead; a numbness covered his face. He tried to speak and knew that his jaw was broken. His mouth was bloody.

He lay all night with the pain becoming more intense. Craig stayed with him.

"Don't tell a soul about this, Craig," he managed to mumble painfully. When Craig promised not to let it out, he seemed to rest a little more easily.

In the morning he walked down to the doctor's office, and an X-ray revealed a double fracture. He was sent to a specialist in Chicago. It required an internal splice, his teeth being wired together to keep the jaw in place.

"How long will I be tied up like this, Doctor?" he asked, on leaving.

"Oh, probably five weeks, at least. Come in once a week for examination."

"And what do I eat in the meantime?"

"Bread and milk."

"What else?"

"More bread and milk."

"Hmm!—thanks. Good-by, Doctor."

He returned, talking through his teeth like one

acting the part of a villain. He met inquiries with the explanation that he had fallen down the stairs in the Gym, and, in falling, had struck his jaw on the window-ledge near the bottom.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

OUTWARDLY MacRae was never happier. Inwardly he had never been more miserable. This was the difference between his nature and Wendell's. He could conceal his deepest emotions.

And so, he greeted Fay on the campus with a mumbled but cheery "Hello!" His locked jaw seemed only to make his smile more attractive, as it revealed more of his white teeth. The curious accident puzzled Fay. She wasn't satisfied with the explanation he gave. She carried her heart about empty and ungarnished, like a swept room. Its emptiness hurt her. His smile haunted her. But she too met him with a feigned cheerfulness. What is this comic farce that tragic lives will play, this half-heroic smiling that hides tears? Wendell knew nothing of this acting. He sulked constantly. He passed MacRae without a word; Fay with a blunt nod and a hostile glance. Randall did not like this latter. He noticed it.

One evening, after supper, he rapped harshly on Wendell's door. A muffled and gruff "Come in," was his response. He stepped inside and approached Wendell's desk.

"Wendell," he said in a voice of cutting edge, made more incisive coming through his teeth. The

use of the last name was significant. Usually it was "Bruce." "I've taken about enough from you. Some things I won't take. Listen, you blind fool!" He shoved the bigger man back into his chair as he started to his feet. "I haven't come to pay you back for this." He touched his jaw. "That was a love-tap compared to the blow Fay gave me a little earlier. It was only a counter-irritant to a deeper pain. You did me a favor, even if it was a cowardly trick. But, listen, you big lumbering idiot, if you don't wake up from your fool, dirty dreams, I'll wake you! Do you hear?"

Wendell returned a surly, vacant stare.

"I don't get you," he said slowly.

"All right, I'll make it so clear you can't misunderstand me. If I see you give Fay one of those insidious looks again, I'll pound the livin' daylights out of you. I swear I will! She's as clean a girl as God ever made. I haven't even kissed her, let alone thought of the things your twisted mind has imagined about us. Now get this: The night you saw us we were going into Celt Hall. She played the piano for me, and then we went for a walk. That night I got my answer. Now we're in the same boat, you and I. Are you satisfied?"

"Is that straight, MacRae?"

"What would be the advantage of lying? Can't you see I love her? You don't know what it's like!" He had forgotten for the moment to whom he was talking.

"No; I don't know what it's like," Wendell muttered dully. "MacRae, when you've loved her as long as I have, you may begin to know how I feel."

"Well, if you still love her, begin to treat her decently—or confound you, I'll break more than your jaw!" His eyes were cold steel when he was angry.

Wendell rose to his feet. His face was gaunt. It had deeper lines. He had grown thinner these last weeks.

"I'm sorry, MacRae," he said. "Can you forgive me? I was wrong. I should have known better than think it of her. But I was afraid of you. I haven't been able to figure you out yet."

"Probably not. Perhaps this will help you: I came to Wharton for just one purpose—to be near Fay Thurston; to win her love if possible. I've lost the game."

"I can't understand that, Ranny." His voice had softened wonderfully. "I'm sure she loves you. If she only looked at me once the way she looks at you, I'd be a different man. What's the trouble? Why did she turn you down?"

"Religion." It was uttered with disgust. "I'm not pious enough, I guess."

Wendell looked out of the window into the early dusk. MacRae's answer carried him back to the night when he had told Fay that she would always be an inspiration to him. Instead he had let this despairing love for her sweep him away from the only

source of strength and peace: his faith in the Lord Jesus. In a flash he saw it. He had made a mistake. He pitied MacRae. He was terribly sorry for Fay. They should be together. They loved each other. He put his hand on MacRae's shoulder.

"I'm sorry, Ran," he said gently. "But I'm sure it will be all right. You'll get her yet. You may change. She really loves you. It's not hopeless like my case."

Wendell's changed attitude startled MacRae out of his selfish suffering. In their mutual sympathy these men once more shook hands, and in the clasp was the seal of lifelong friendship. No closer bond can be found than sympathetic fellowship in suffering. Its knot is Gordian.

MacRae left the room with a sudden elation, a feeling that out of darkness had come light.

Under his door he found a note that made his heart leap. It was addressed in Fay's handwriting. He sat down in a chair before he opened it.

"Dear Ranny," it began, as if nothing had ever happened between them. His heart took another leap as he read on, "I want to speak to you as soon as possible. Please." That was all. It was signed simply "Fay."

He had taken off his coat and vest and tie upon coming in after supper. The balmy air of spring made him want to relax. He did not wait now to put on a thing, but started rapidly across the campus in his shirt sleeves, his collar open at the neck.

A few of the young people were still out in front of the Dorm playing outdoor baseball with an indoor ball. Their glad laughter and light banter sounded sweet in the evening hush. At times came the swock of bat against the semihard ball. Then yelling and laughter, as the runner slipped on the dewy grass going around second. It was almost too dark to see well, but they continued to play as long as they could see the ball. He passed them, declining their invitation to join the game, and hurried into the Dorm, asking for Miss Thurston at the office.

She came down in a moment. He was nervous and excited. She seemed strangely calm.

"Hello, Ranny. Are you going to be awfully busy tonight?"

This forwardness in her astonished him.

"No; why?"

"Well, you'll think it funny, but I've got to go in to Chi to meet that eleven o'clock train from New York, and I wondered if you would go along for company. I think I can get per for you, under the circumstances."

"You know I'd love to go, Fay. It's a little more than I expected."

"Don't look at it that way, please, Ranny. That's definitely closed. I'm simply assuming that we can still be good friends. Am I right?"

That was an awful let-down. His spirits drooped.

He said, "Yes; quite"; but he meant, "I doubt it." Then he asked, "What train are we taking?"

"The nine-thirty, I guess."

"Are you meeting a friend?"

"Yes; Mrs. Wentworth. You heard about the awful accident, didn't you?"

"What, that taxi getting smashed up at the Aurora and Elgin crossing?"

"Yes; that was Jack Wentworth. He was killed instantly; drunk, I guess. Poor Mrs. Wentworth, poor dear. I don't know whatever I'll do. The funeral is tomorrow. She is going to stay with me tonight. I want you along to help me."

MacRae felt suddenly weak. What an awful break! This was going to be tough. Still he would have to see it through. Fay's apparent coldness chilled his inmost fiber. His hopes had risen so swiftly that their fall was painfully hard. He began to think she liked to rub it in. She was taking him out to gloat over his suffering. His elation turned to bitterness.

Actually, Fay's invitation had come as the result of a night of struggle. She was convinced that she could not give him up.

But how should MacRae know that when she had just now so curtly informed him of his true status with her. Simply a friend! That was the most confounded fool idea ever perpetrated. How can you be a friend when your love is stifled, and crushed, and denied? It was utterly impossible until the wound was healed, until the sharpness of first love

was gone. Still, he would play the part to the best of his ability. It was a difficult rôle.

The trip in was unpleasant, with strained conversation, forced and unnatural ease, and little laughter.

The trip back was different. They met Mrs. Wentworth at the station. She had aged in a week. She was not the trim little woman he had met at the tent several months before. Her skin had lost its healthy color and firmness. The pallor of grief covered it. Her hair was white now, not silver. Only her voice and eyes were the same. He marveled at her courage. There was nothing of hysteria in her actions. She greeted him strangely after her natural surprise upon recognizing him:

"My dear boy, I need a stronger arm than yours now, but it's good to see you again, God bless you." Her voice choked. Her eyes were dry. They had ceased weeping.

Getting her aboard the train, the young people turned two seats together and sat opposite her, feeling utterly helpless. All the way out she talked about Jack. She told them little stories of his boyhood—of his cunning tricks, his cute ways, his sweet disposition, his youthful devotion. Fay felt the tears blinding her eyes at times. She noticed something strange working in Randall's face; noticed the tenseness at his throat; the hunted look in his eyes. This was life's crowning tragedy. There was noth-

ing greater than this—a mother's blighted hopes and prayers—because there is no love greater than a mother's. This does not come often upon the stage. This is too deep for show.

They took a taxi to the Dorm. She trembled a little as MacRae helped her in.

The next day, at the funeral service, the Chapel was filled with students who had known Jack Wentworth. Some of the boys who had helped him on the skids were there. They were sorry for him; glad they weren't in the gray casket.

It was a sad ceremony. It is sad to bury anyone; but when the body is so mutilated that it cannot be seen, when the soul has been likewise darkened and lost, tragedy can go no deeper.

At the last Mrs. Wentworth broke down as the pallbearers took up their burden. Fay had asked Randall to sit with her. He put his arm about her as she burst into violent sobbing. The shudder of her shoulders ran into his very soul. What if this were his mother? What was there to keep him from going on a similar road? What about the way he had treated his father? There, as he tried to soothe a broken-hearted mother, he came to the first consciousness of the truth that "the wages of sin is death." There, for the first time since his speculative, philosophical difficulties with the truths of Christianity had been moved into the background, he was slowly being convinced of a vital lack in his own life.

Two days later he saw Mrs. Wentworth off. He kissed her tenderly on the cheek. A sudden ache of heart sympathy had overcome his Scotch reticence. It almost broke her down again, to get from a stranger that which she had longed for from a son. She asked him to send her a photograph of himself. He promised to do so.

When Fay saw the touching scene, she went back to her room to pray again for Randall. Anew she was convinced that here was a silver trumpet that only needed the breath of the Divine Spirit to waken it into a life of beautiful music. She had gotten the figurative idea from her talk with President Brainard about MacRae. It was a good one, she thought.

And Randall returned to begin once more the spiritual struggle. But this time it was on a new basis. Dr. Nostrum had settled his philosophical difficulties; had revealed the reasonableness of Christianity, its deep and basic truth. He could no longer laugh it off as a collection of old wives' fables. The story of the resurrection of Christ bore its self-evidencing truth upon its face when read with an open mind. It could not be explained away rationally. You couldn't account for that little discouraged, down-hearted band shaking the world and turning the course of empire because of a mere fiction, a phantasmal creation of their own despairing minds. You couldn't account for Saul, the fanatical persecutor, becoming Paul, chief of mis-

sionaries, the bravest of martyrs. And given the miracle of the Resurrection, given that break in the sealed scheme of natural causation, the top was off. The other miracles became not only believable, but became quite natural phenomena when found in connection with a supernatural Being. Yes, his rational objections to Christ's claims had been removed.

Now, the only thing that stood in the way was Self—selfish ambition, selfish desire. One moment he would think he had it down, shoulders pinned, surrender made; then, somehow, it would slip out of his hold and have him on his back, writhing. No struggle in all the world is quite so intense, so dramatic, so real as the struggle within a human soul. It is torture; it is agony. MacRae lived it for weeks. While his jaw healed, his mind became raw with conflict.

In a vain attempt to throw off the unbearable feeling he began going out with Nita. He took her to various college functions. He walked with her in the soft May evenings, after supper, when all the world was fragrant, and the turf spongy with warm life, and the emerald leaves were brilliant flecks of green-gold in the setting sun. He took her canoeing on the St. Charles river. He played tennis with her.

So passed the month of May, the month of lovers, the month of sweetest youth.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The first week in bridal June was the last week of the scholastic year. Early roses were in bloom, and books had withered into collections of dry and crackling leaves.

In recent years the custom had sprung up for the Senior class to sneak off for a trip together ere they were scattered forever to separate and unknown parts. This year arrangements had been made to go to Cedar Lake over the weekend. MacRae took the announcement of the trip without any of the enthusiasm evident in the others. The jaw had healed in the six weeks. The internal splice had just been removed two days before; so he could think of no adequate excuse for not going. Perhaps he would not be more miserable than if he remained behind.

It was pearl dawn when they set out in cars for the hundred mile drive. He had been assigned to Jean Culver's car, a heavy Cadillac, into which nine young people piled, MacRae being placed in the front seat, next to Jean. She drove with skill, and ease, and daring.

Fay was in another car; Nita would not be going, of course. He found an unexpected respite from his misery in the swift flight eastward and south. Conrad sat in front with him. He was the school

wit, typically collegiate, but nevertheless exceptionally original. In his more humorous moments his tongue was as nimble as Shakespeare's Hamlet. From the start he kept the group in continual laughter by his light-hearted persiflage. MacRae could not fail to lose his somber thoughts in the general glow of mirth and gladness.

Jean was the most delightfully vivacious girl he had ever met. In this quality of overabounding life she surpassed even Nita. He had had several dates with her since that first night he had taken her home from the Outside Girls' Party; but somehow he had never really seen her until this morning. The image of Fay's sweetness had always blocked his vision. Lately he had been consciously trying to wash it from the mirror of his mind, but the blur was always there. It was brown hair, and brown eyes, and a darling chin.

Now, he found that he was enjoying his position close to Jean. How had he failed to appreciate her all these weeks? She should have been the model for a white marble symbolizing "Life." Her hair was an aureole of light chestnut curls. The wind whipped it behind dainty ears that would have been spoiled by earrings. Her face had the regular Grecian grace of a sensitive bronze. Her hair, her eyes, her lips, her hands, her whole body were alive. He had seen her often on the tennis courts. Then he had remarked on her fine game. Now he thought of her perfect build. It was a body substantial and

beautiful as stone, fluid as water, light as air, and all fire—composed of all the basic elements.

It was still early morning when they reached the lake, the first car to arrive. Together they wandered about the place eagerly and joyously, free to forget books and classes, everything about school except the undying friendships. They were like children off for a holiday. Their glee was irrepressible.

MacRae felt his "sable suit" slipping from him. This would be fun, after all—with a girl like Jean. Her voice got him, somehow. So did her laughter. It floated and fluttered, beautiful as a summer butterfly. He followed it with the careful strategy of an ardent entomologist.

Soon the other cars arrived, bringing the boxes of food, as well as load after load of young people, dressed in easy sports clothes and sweaters.

The lake was regularly the scene of summer conferences, but at this time of the year it was still practically deserted. They had been able to rent the camp grounds, kitchen, dining hall, sleeping shacks, boats, and tennis courts, at a nominal figure.

Everyone was given a definite duty, and by noon the girls had a camp meal ready, one of those meals that would create an appetite anywhere, but which, finding one ready made, was more delectable than the most tempting Roman banquet.

MacRae did not know that he was really avoiding Fay. He did not do so intentionally. She looked

charming in the plaited sports dress and light buff colored sweater. He did not look at her often. His eyes were for Jean. He had her signed up for a tennis match in the afternoon. Then they went swimming. When she took a winged swan dive from the second diving platform, his desire leaped in with her. She was at will a wood-nymph, or an aerial sprite, or a mermaid, or just a college girl. She had enchanted him. The fact that she was known to be engaged to a young lawyer in Chicago did not affect him in the least. Neither did it seem to hinder her from having what she considered a "good time." She had that natural feminine delight in masculine attention. She had often wanted to know MacRae better; and now, with a subtlety which Nita lacked, she mingled reserve and coquettish friendliness and put the powerful potion to his lips.

The three days were full from painted morning until tired evening, when the girls went to bed to the music of a moonlit serenade outside their windows.

When the last night came, plans were made to light a bonfire and have an old Wharton sing in its gleam and warmth. But while the wood was being gathered in the curtained dusk, MacRae lost his head entirely. He asked Jean to go for a short canoe trip in the moonlight. The chaperons wouldn't miss them until after the bonfire. She agreed, after brief coaxing.

Together they stole away to the shingled beach. He had hidden a canoe beside an abrupt little shelving bank. It was still there. It swayed with a light swashing when she stepped into it and sat down in the center on the cushions he had brought. With three gurgling strokes, he sent the prow nosing out into the silver path.

Behind them the colors died in the western sky. The last glow was gone when the match was struck to a heap of wood on a pine-circled knoll. They turned to watch the tiny spark dance, and flicker, and catch, and eventually leap into flame. The crackling of the resinous wood reached them faintly like the ticking of a watch under a pillow.

They slid along the shadowed shore with a little purling of water at the bow and a dripping ripple where the paddle dipped slowly. Jean reclined back, with one hand trailing like a lily in the water over the side of the canoe. She was humming sweetly a popular melody, and watching MacRae with passionate eyes that said, "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

It did not take him long to answer the unspoken question. They drifted silently into a little cove overhung with drooping willows. It was not far from the bonfire. MacRae stowed his paddle and moved toward her. She made room for him beside her.

By this time MacRae had forgotten entirely any object he may have had in coming to Wharton. He

had surrendered suddenly and completely to the intoxicating desire to take this girl in his arms. The animation seemed to have left her. She became passive and pliant as the willow boughs above her.

"Do you remember our first excursion together?" he asked quietly, with his cheek against hers, smooth and soft and warm.

"M-hmm," she murmured pensively.

"There was no moon that night."

"That was a good party though, wasn't it? You'll have to hand it to us. Just think, this is our last week at Wharton! It does not seem possible."

The conversation drifted softly as the canoe. There were minutes when the playful slap of water alone was heard. There were little murmured remarks. There was physical ecstasy. He kissed her cheek. Slowly she turned her lips to his.

Across the ruffle of silver came the sound of young voices. Ukes were strumming their rhythmic sweetness as accompaniment. No music is quite so poignantly thrilling as voices carried by an evening breeze across moonlit water.

They were singing hymns, the old, beloved Wharton hymns, singing together for almost the last time. MacRae listened. He heard:

"Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Thou art the Potter,
I am the clay.
Mold me and make me

After Thy will,
While I am waiting,
Yielded and still."

That had been a favorite hymn at the Wharton prayer meetings. Fay had been playing it that night he turned away definitely from Christ. It lingered now on the air in the hush of temple quiet. It entered MacRae's soul like a needle and drew after it a thread of linked memories. The needle's sharpness was the thought that he was leaving Wharton.

While they sang, all of the year's struggles rose up within him again: the voice of dear old Prexy calling him a silver trumpet, asking him to dedicate his life to the service of Christ; the voice of the heroic African missionary, challenging him to be a man; the voice of Dr. Nostrum, pointing out in his scholarly way the emptiness of unbelief; the quiver of Mrs. Wentworth's sorrow on his shoulder; the voice of Fay! This became stronger. He seemed to hear it above the rest, singing:

"Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Hold o'er my being
Absolute sway!
Fill with Thy Spirit
Till all shall see
Christ only, always,
Living in me."

And it carried him back to the Brooklyn tent. He heard her playing. He heard the white-haired

prophet saying, " 'To me to live is Christ.' Beloved, that is Paul's estimate of life. 'To die is gain.' That is his estimate of death, and you can't write his estimate of death after anything except his estimate of life—'To me to live is Christ.' "

Suddenly he felt as if he had drunk the bitter lees at the bottom of a goblet of sweet wine. What was this he was doing? turning away from life eternal for a few years of selfish gratification and worldly ambition! It was all wrong. He had been a fool. Why not yield to Christ? Why not?

And there, with Jean Culver still in his arms, and with the voices from the camp-fire singing, "Have Thine Own Way, Lord," Randall MacRae at last yielded his life. The struggle had been too great. After all, he could not resist this Person whose love would never cease pursuing him. He thought of Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*, and into his heart leaped a quick joy. The battle was over. Now he could really sing:

> "Fill with Thy Spirit
> Till all shall see
> Christ only, always,
> Living in me."

The spirit of Wharton had drawn another soul to Christ and into His Kingdom.

He rose carefully and, moving back to his seat, took up the paddle.

"Let's go in and join the circle," he said in a

voice new to himself. "We won't get a chance to sing with them again perhaps."

Jean was surprised. She wondered what had caused his sudden reaction from the bliss in which she had been sharing.

Before they left the outer darkness of the surrounding pines for the fire's ruddy warmth they separated and arrived at different times from different angles, approaching casually, as if they had been detained.

MacRae took in the scene from the shadow of a pine while he waited for Jean to get seated. The fire had burned out its first fierceness and now glowed liked heated metal. About it, Indian-fashion, sat the class with which he was graduating. He studied them one by one as they started a new song.

There was sweet-spirited Craig; Wendell had not come. There was light-hearted Conrad; tall Martow, who had earned fourteen letters in athletics, playing every year in at least three, sometimes four, sports; who had been editor of the annual year book; one time editor of the weekly; active in his literary society, and high in his studies—a phenomenal young chap. There was tubby, good-natured Rollins. There was handsome, dignified Huston, pretty Betty Chaise beside him, gifted Alice White next to her. There were many one-talented individuals too, but folk you could never forget. He went around the circle until he came to Fay. There

his eyes rested. She was beautiful in the firelight. He noticed her clothes: dark red skirt, lavender sweater with a little red silk kerchief in one pocket and a red pendant at the collar.

She knew how to dress—that girl. As she sang, she looked into the burning coals with eyes that saw visions and dreams. One of these dreams seemed to crumble and vanish like a bit of falling wood in the fire.

He felt a new tenderness steal over him. This was love. His feeling for Nita had never gone beyond the stimulation of flirting sword-play. As for Jean Culver—he looked at her sitting down—that had been a crazy camping infatuation, as sudden, as strong, and as evanescent as an ocean-voyage romance. It had been accelerated by her beauty, and by his disappointment in Fay. But now he could love Fay. He could tell her. He would tell her tonight.

Then the thought came to him painfully that he could not tell her. She would think he was only doing this for her sake. Perhaps he was. He would have to find out for himself. If this surrender was real, he would know it. It must be tested. He would not tell her. He remembered what she had said about being a Christian. With that firm determination in mind he approached the group and sat down noiselessly. They drifted from one song into another.

Then came a time of testimony. One after an-

other told what Wharton had come to mean in his life. Many voices held the tremble of emotion.

With joined hands they stood to sing the "Alma Mater" as the last embers died and a chill wind soughed in the pines.

MacRae took the canoe and paddled off alone around the lake. The physical exertion calmed his jumping nerves and helped him later to sleep.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE "Lit" Society banquet was the last affair of importance before Commencement. Randall had asked Nita some weeks before for a date. He would have to keep it. Once more he visited the florist's and recalled to mind that there in that store on a card he had first suggested his love to Fay. Since then he had told her often. Now he wanted to go to her and tell her of the change in his life—but he could not. He was bound by her words; he could hear them yet: "If you decide to become a Christian it will have to be because you can't help loving the Lord Jesus, not because you think you want me for your wife."

As he left the store he chanced to read the sign in the window: "Flowers sent by telegraph anywhere." With a leap his mind traveled to New York, to his father. He was surprised to find that the bitterness had been drained from his soul. Now he wanted to see the old boy, to tell him he was sorry. The emotion would not be downed. He stepped quickly to a Western Union office and wrote hastily on one of their blanks:

"Getting my degree at Wharton, Illinois, Wednesday next. Come if you possibly can. I

want to see you. Will explain everything then. Love. Randall."

He had debated a long time about putting that last down. It looked funny from him. But it was true now. After that he felt better, as if a load had rolled from his back. He straightened his shoulders and began to whistle on the way home.

The Banquet evening was a June night of fragrant mildness. As he walked down with Nita to the Methodist Church, where it was to be held, he regretted bitterly that Fay was not beside him. She should have been; she would have been, if it had not been for his confounded fighting all year long. He might have known the spirit of the place would get him sooner or later. It had him now heart and soul. Everything about the town and campus had become suddenly dear to him. Every place spoke of some delightful memory.

Other couples were out, strolling leisurely down also. This was the night when you were expected to take your best girl, even if you had to go out of the school for her, if you had to bring her for miles. And here he was taking Nita, and his best girl not even going at all. This was a crazy world. But for all that Nita was stunning in a sleeveless black gown, with a corsage of dark-red rosebuds at her waist, and a streamer of dark red silk draped from it. He should not be taking this girl tonight. He was only hurting her. She still thought she had a chance.

Wendell was there with a girl whom he had never dated before. He sat at the same table, but some distance from them. His stolid features scarcely ever changed their immobile and lifeless expression. It was quite evident that he was there simply because he had been the society president the previous semester and was expected to attend. He was getting nothing out of it.

For that matter, neither was MacRae. Nita tried painfully to be entertaining, and knew she was failing. She could not understand this chap. For six weeks he had dropped Fay and rushed her. Fay would not explain it with so much as a word. Now he was as limp and dull as the most boring Freshman. Near the end of the dinner she said to him:

"Ran, what's the matter?"

"I don't like this ice cream."

"Oh, do be sensible once, please."

"Well, would you like a public confession?"

That silenced her, but it almost brought tears.

"Excuse me, kid. I'll tell you later," he said, so tenderly that a smile broke through the cloud of her face.

After that they were on better terms until his turn on the evening's program came. He was on for a trumpet solo. In spite of the fact that he had been unable to practice for five weeks and had had the wire off his teeth for only a week, he played with unforgetable brilliance. He had in-

tended to play a piece of scintillating colorature, but the experience at Cedar Lake had done something to him. His desires, his ambitions, had changed. They were still there, strongly there, but they ran in a new channel. So, instead of making the banquet group gasp with admiration at his flaring technique, he caused them to vibrate with delight to his tonal purity. He played "The Holy City," and as he played, he thought again of the herald on the walls. He trembled with a strong emotion, and the trumpet transmitted its strength. He rose to a climax, ending on a piercing high note that sang and sang in triumphant hope while the piano thundered down to its dénouement in the bass clef. He knew when he sat down, after playing two encores, that he had found his voice at last.

Nita was almost silent until they were on the way home. Other couples were walking slowly, making the most of the lingering moon.

"Nita," he said at length, finding the walk embarrassing, "you've been a keen friend to me this year. I want to remember you always. Will you write once in a while?"

It was so different from what she had wished and dreamed.

"As often as you do."

"Of course, you know I love someone else, don't you?"

"I ought to. You've told me often enough," she said a little bitterly. "What I can't understand

is why you aren't out with her tonight. This second fiddle business isn't so hot."

"I'm realizing that, and I want to ask your forgiveness for the way I've acted this year. I haven't been square with you."

"Don't let that bother you. I won't cry over you the way Fay did."

"The way Fay did?"

"Certainly. The night you threw her over I found her crying herself sick."

"I threw her over?"

"What is this, a responsive reading, with you taking the refrain? I suppose you'll tell me now that she threw you over and came home and cried about it."

"That's exactly what I'll tell you if you say she cried."

"Do you expect me to believe that? You'll tell the next one that I dropped you too, eh?"

"Don't be catty."

"Just continue to be fool enough to believe you."

"At least I never told you I loved you."

"No, you didn't say much, but you did plenty."

"Honestly, Nita, did I ever lead you to believe that I loved you?"

"Yes; several times."

"How?"

She stopped under a leafy maple.

"Kiss me again, and you may remember."

He saw her eyes brim, and took her hand.

"Nita, I understand. Forgive me. I'm awfully sorry. You've taught me one lesson. I didn't know you took it that way."

"I don't usually," she said with a curious little laugh that had no mirth in it; "at least, I never did before. Perhaps it's just because I'm growing up. I do feel awfully old. Imagine, I'll be nineteen next month!" He seemed sad. She laughed again, a little more cheerily. "Oh, let's forget it and be good friends, Ran. I'll always be mighty glad I met you—and those walks out Irving Avenue— Oh, well—I won't forget."

When he simply took her hand that night as he left her, they were both a little embarrassed. She broke off one of her corsage rosebuds and gave it to him.

"Put that among your souvenirs."

He took it unwillingly and, reaching his room later, sat fingering it for an hour before he went to bed.

So Fay had cried that night! Of what curious stuff are women made. No; he couldn't tell her.

And he did not.

Even on the last day—of caps, and gowns, and diplomas, and Alumni, and parents, and addresses, and luncheons—he did not tell her.

The previous evening he had met his father in Chicago. It had been a scene new to the MacRae family. There was a great joy in having your father grip your hand and kiss your cheek and say,

"Ranny, m' boy!" a little hurriedly, as if afraid he might not get it out, and choke, and say no more for a moment.

All the way out to Wharton the father had been unbelievably enthusiastic. His plans for the boy soared again. He outlined them, sketched them, and was surprised to find no response, no answering enthusiasm.

"What's the matter, Ranny? Doesn't it sound good?"

"Yes; it sounds good, but I know I won't be happy. I think I've found my work, Dad."

"You won't come in with me?" It was a heart-breaking tone. It was keen disappointment. "I thought you'd changed, Ran."

It was no longer a struggle for Randall. He had fought this thing through. That night in the canoe on Cedar Lake, he had settled this question, although he did not know it then. It had been settled for him by One who had taken possession of his life. But it was hard. It was one of those times Fay mentioned, when surrender is tested.

"I have changed, Dad. That's just it. I've come to see true values in life. I've learned that God has a work for each of us to do if we are in His will. It is generally along the line we are most fitted for by His endowment. I'm sure I'll be more effective in coaching than in business. I won't make money, or fame; but I may make some young lives

stronger, and cleaner, and nobler by His grace, and I consider that a man's job."

"But Ranny, what will happen to my work? I wanted you to carry on."

"I'm not fitted for it. I have no business inclinations. I'm just not built like you. I take after Mother."

"So you do. Well, you know best. Where will you be coaching?"

"Here at Wharton. Prexy has held the position open since December for me. He says he knew I'd come around. I fought it, Dad, fought hard, but I lost in the end. I want you to meet Prexy. He's my ideal."

He met Prexy. He met others: teachers, Professor Stone; friends of Randall's: Craig, Wendell, Nita, and Fay. He met Fay by accident. Randall hadn't sought her out. It was after the Commencement exercises were over, when the procession emptied into and mingled with the waiting crowd outside the Chapel. He had been looking for his father, and found him just as Fay passed, removing her cap and gown.

After she had been introduced to the man who she understood was dead, and after she had gone on in almost girlish embarrassment, he said to his father,

"That's the girl that brought me here."

"You love her?"

"So much that it's not funny."

"Well, won't she have you?"

"Not yet."

"What do you mean?"

"I've got to meet conditions."

"What are they?"

"I have to be a Christian."

"A Christian! What ridiculous conditions!"

"Not at all."

"But aren't you a Christian?"

"I am now, but she doesn't know it."

"Haven't you told her?"

"No, and I don't intend to. I'm hoping she will discover the change. If she never does until it's too late, well, I run that risk."

"You're still the same crazy kid with the big ideas."

"Perhaps so, but I have a purpose in this one."

That night he left with his father for New York. Before leaving, he went to the Dorm to say good-by to Fay, and learned that she had gone on the early afternoon train.

His head ached dully as his train passed the point from which the last good view of the college tower was obtainable. He watched it sink slowly into the grave of elm foliage.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Often during the hot summer following his graduation Randall MacRae regretted the purpose which had kept him from telling Fay. This was torture —to live and not know where she was, what she was doing; to be terribly alone, even in the midst of friends. He pictured her at a summer conference, and at a grand piano, as he had seen her first.

In those days Randall learned to pray. He seldom retired at night without kneeling at his bedside and asking the Lord to take care of Fay and use her playing to His glory.

He learned to do more than pray.' That was the first step in his spiritual growth. The second followed soon. In spite of his strenuous work in his father's employ—he had consented to work with him one summer—he still found time for testimony. One of his most interesting experiences along this path of his new life came by invitation from a Wharton friend whose father was the Protestant Bible teacher in Sing Sing Prison.

One Wednesday night, after business hours, he took his trumpet, and met his friend and his father at the Grand Central. He would not forget the picture of those faces above gray suits, black and white faces, singing in their slow drawl and qua-

vering harmony their favorite hymn, "My Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me."

He did not consider it unmanly to feel a tear dampen his cheek. With their eager eyes watching him, their eager ears open, he played with inspired beauty:

> "Out of the ivory palaces
> Into a world of woe—
> Only His great, eternal love
> Made my Saviour go."

Nor could those twisted and broken lives forget his young voice, his clean manliness, as he told them the story of his conversion. He closed it by repeating part of Thompson's *Hound of Heaven;* and though many of them were almost illiterate, the overpowering sense of those feet that followed, followed after, moved their hearts and softened their hardness. Several that night accepted Christ as their personal Saviour, and requested prayer that they might stand true to Him in the midst of that grim, awful place. MacRae had never before experienced such profound joy. It was the highwater mark in the tide of that summer's happiness. Its lowest ebb came one day in August.

He was returning from a business trip to Philadelphia, and his train had made a stop near Newark. As it was picking up speed again and had almost reached its traveling rate, an express from the West nosed past on a parallel track. The clank of

its engine roused him from his book. He loved to watch the great steel creatures in action. The locomotive passed by, then two—three—four—five cars. Then the lighter train upon which he was traveling began to attain speed. They neared a bridge crossing; and his train, evidently being a little late, had the right of way across the bridge first. For a time the trains moved side by side. He looked through his window into the Pullman car. He studied the characters there and thought how strangely separate they were from him. So near and yet so far. His train began to forge ahead. Slowly they re-passed the Pullmans.

Suddenly, he was startled by fear and hope. Sitting in one of the Pullman cars which his train was passing was Fay Thurston, or if it was not Fay Thurston, it was her image. She was reading a book and never looked up. It would have been useless to wave his hands, or pound on the window. She could not have heard.

In a moment the tan traveling suit, the blue hat, the sweet face had gone. They thundered over the bridge and then when they made their next stop, the express whirled by them with a roar of steam and steel. He did not see her again.

All of the passionate longings which he had crushed by his determination not to tell her sprang up afresh. He sat in a trance that was really the stillness of wrestling bodies, terribly straining, but not apparently moving. He should have told her.

Once they were going in opposite directions, as she had said. Now they were going in the same direction, but on different trains. This was awful. The experience symbolized his fate. He could not reach her. If his train had only arrived first! But now, New York! He could never find her.

It would have done him no good to search, for two days later Fay Thurston boarded the *Majestic* for England.

A week later he left for Michigan to take a course in coaching. Two weeks after he had finished the course he was in charge of the Wharton football camp at Indian Lake, Michigan.

He returned to Wharton in mid-September with his squad, to find that every campus spot reminded him of Fay. He recalled his first trip to the flat little town, his first impressions of the school, his nostalgia for Princeton. He returned with gladness. Wharton had become a part of him. He loved it. That fall he worked with indefatigable energy. It gave him less time to think about Fay.

Nita had not returned. Her last humorous letter to him said that she was going to Columbia day-school and Broadway night-school. MacRae could imagine what that meant. He was sorry for her. She had dancing aspirations. She had the body for it all right. But, poor kid, that was no life for her! He began to see the futility of some things.

Homecoming was to be a big event that fall. It

coincided with the North Central game on the home field. It meant a bigger crowd than ever, now that Wharton had broken the age-old jinx. Invitation postcards were mailed to all the Alumni, and they were expected to return their names for reservations if they were coming.

The day before the game they started to come in, only a few at first, but later in great numbers. MacRae went to the office in the afternoon to look over the names of those who were returning. No; Fay's wasn't there. It wouldn't be, of course. She wouldn't come from California.

That night a huge pep meeting was held behind the Gym on the old tennis courts that were being excavated as the site for a new building. There in the clay hollow a great fire was built. It raged to the height of twenty feet and carried with it the shouts of the gathered crowd.

When it died down, speeches were made by the various football men, most of whom would rather play ten games than give one speech. As a fitting conclusion the new coach, MacRae, was pushed to the front of the giant ring of Alumni and students, about the live, glowing timbers. He removed his hat when the applause ceased and the yelling echoed into silence, and began:

"Alumni and students of Wharton, this gathering tonight is but one manifestation of Wharton spirit, but I enjoy it. I came to this school last year as a total stranger. Almost immediately I came

into contact with a vital animus which was quite new to me. I could not understand it.

"I helped to coach the football team last year, and all the while I was constantly baffled by things I would see and hear on the campus. It was altogether foreign to my idea of life that football men should pray before a game, that football men should hold street meetings in towns they visited, that they should play without using foul tactics when the opportunity presented itself—and that they should still win football games. I thought that stuff was all right for a Bible Institute gospel team—but for football it could only produce mollycoddles and milksops. I despaired of ever seeing such a team do anything worthy of the name of football. I was totally surprised, as you can imagine. Wharton men could play football, and play it hard, and fast, and clean.

"It was a revelation to me. Still, I went all year, feeling the Wharton spirit, but understanding it not; until last June, at a fire something like this, I learned what was the secret of this school's life. I came to know the Master of my fate, the Captain of my soul, and surrendered to Him. In surrender I found strength. I found that the spirit of Wharton is the spirit of Christ. And so, instead of sitting in a Brooklyn office, I'm out here tonight having the time of my life training a bunch of the finest young men I know to beat North Central tomorrow."

He put on his hat and smiled a little at the bursts of cheers exploding like batteries of rockets about him. He was happy after all. This was God's purpose for his life: to lead young men under his coaching to the Captain of their salvation; to give them an example in his daily life and walk.

While the Frosh began to throw water on the dying embers, and as the excavation turned slowly dark, he waited motionless, musing on the Cedar Lake bonfire which had meant the turning point in his life; then he followed the crowd out of the hollow.

Just as he regained the rim, he heard a voice, "Ranny."

His heart leaped like a scared rabbit. There was only one voice that could say his name that way. Then he saw her with her hand extended. He took it, only to draw her to him, into his arms. She did not expect it, but she did not resist, and her innocent girlish kiss, half-bashfully returned, thrilled him the more.

"Fay," he murmured, still holding her in his arms, and looking into her dark eyes, "why didn't you tell me you were coming?"

"That's not the question. I almost missed this. I just arrived from England last week. I'm on my way home. Just happened to strike it right, didn't I? But what if I hadn't, Ranny? How long would you have let me go on praying, hoping, suffering? Why didn't you tell me?"

"Dearest, don't you remember what you said about my becoming a Christian? It had to be for His sake, not yours. I had to prove it to myself and I had to prove it to you. I felt sure that if I was in His will, He would bring us together sometime."

"Oh, Ranny, I'm so happy! You're His silver trumpet after all. I knew you would be. Your speech tonight—it was wonderful."

"Save some of that, dear, until after we're married. I'll need it then."

"Don't worry; you'll get it too."

"Say, honey, let's go out to the old stone wall and start all over—hm?"

"Let's."

There on the old wall, the joy of a pure, high love lifted two young lives into youth's sweetest heaven. There they made plans, dreamed dreams, and lived their future lives in one blissful hour of hopeful prophecy. Oh, the dreams of youth!

"Where's Nita?" Fay asked, at length.

"New York. She's been leading a pretty wild life lately, but she got her eyes opened the other night. I had a letter from her three days ago. She says she's coming back to Wharton in January." Thoughtfully he added, "Bruce is coaching and teaching in an Indian reservation school in Arizona. They say he's turning out some team."

"I know. I had a letter from him shortly before I left England. Dear old Bruce! He wrote me a rather sweet poem in which he says he can never

forget me, and in a note he says he can now be just a friend. Isn't he fine?"

"He's a prince."

"Almost as nice as you."

"Now, Fay, what did I tell you? Save that till after— Kiss me now."

She did—happily, contentedly, with a little sigh of gladness.

"And you're not going home," he said imperiously.

"Oh, but I must."

"Why?"

"I've got so much I want to do, have to do. You can come out Christmas vacation, eh? And I'll come back with you—Fay MacRae. Isn't that a musical name you're giving me? Don't look so sour. We'll be married New Year's Eve. All right?"

"You're the boss," he grunted, playfully disgruntled.

"Mmm!—now you save that too, will you?"

"No doubt you'll see that I do. Where do we go next summer, boss?"

"Oh, I've made arrangements to play at three conferences next summer. You'll go too, and play your trumpet. It will be just great, eh?"

"Yes, honey, I'll be glad to play an obbligato for you any time."

"No, it won't be that. You'll always lead me, Ranny. I'm much better at accompaniment. Really."